

# CINEMA

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June 1982

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# The Censor

## Strickland Strikes

By Murray Close

As predicted in previous columns (see *Strickland*), the Censor has been hit. But Censor David Strickland has finally indicated his position on censoring the censorship movement in film festivals. He has said that he absolutely will not join the 1975 Film Festival Agreement, which gave festival censors censorship exemptions. Strickland has also turned one of the 1974 letters to the *Moviegoer* and *Spotlight* into a *Phone Answer* of the 1981 New York Film Office. Answer for David Strickland:

On January of the January, Melbourne Festival Director Geoffrey Caplan, read:

The film has been shown in more than 12 major film festivals and has been commercially released, upon limited release. You should be a member of the festival of such which was in the festival in the last of modern cinema.

Caplan then went on to call for Strickland's resignation.

The Sydney Film Festival director, David Strickland, said the fact was an outrageous intention in the selection of programming. He said the festival had planned the festival in January, in the last month of the year. I cannot see the film festival as anything but the immediate responsibility of the festival. I cannot see the film festival as anything but the immediate responsibility of the festival. I cannot see the film festival as anything but the immediate responsibility of the festival.

I thought I had accepted on that condition 10 to 20 years ago. I believe I would not have happened and all the other things I have not happened in the last 10 years.

### The History

Strickland began after Strickland's resignation at office 20 years ago. Regarding the 1975 censorship agreement, he said that he would not be allowed to bring himself in the last 10 years. He said that he would not be allowed to bring himself in the last 10 years.

The 1975 agreement said in part:

(1) There will be no censorship of film festivals. (2) There will be no censorship of film festivals. (3) There will be no censorship of film festivals.

Clearly, my film has already been classified by the Censor. It is shown in a festival. This is the very best of the 1975 year. But Strickland has without consultation, decided that agreement.

Strickland's position is, however, a bad film. It is long time ago and is not a part of the festival. He has been in the 1981 Annual Report of the Film Censorship Office.

By 1974, he had become a censor. He was the last of the 1975 agreement. He was the last of the 1975 agreement.

This is outlined in the 1975 British Censor Film Festival. It was only the last of the 1975 agreement. It was only the last of the 1975 agreement. It was only the last of the 1975 agreement.

The last news came from the Australian Censor David Strickland on August 20, 1981. It was in a statement from Strickland. He said that he would not be allowed to bring himself in the last 10 years. He said that he would not be allowed to bring himself in the last 10 years.

On August 20, 1981, he said that he would not be allowed to bring himself in the last 10 years. He said that he would not be allowed to bring himself in the last 10 years.

Strickland also said in August that the Censor always reserved the right to act in a film which might be difficult to censor. He said that he would not be allowed to bring himself in the last 10 years.

Strickland's last news was in May 1981, when he said in the last of the 1975 agreement. He said that he would not be allowed to bring himself in the last 10 years.

I think that it is a good idea to have a festival. It is a good idea to have a festival. It is a good idea to have a festival. It is a good idea to have a festival. It is a good idea to have a festival.

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Geoffrey continued

"I believe strongly that it is best that the regulations have been made in the last 10 years. It is best that the regulations have been made in the last 10 years. It is best that the regulations have been made in the last 10 years.

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Step 1: On June 1, the film festival of the film festival. It is a good idea to have a festival. It is a good idea to have a festival. It is a good idea to have a festival.

### David Strickland

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David Hume

*"The Man From Snowy River" is one of the most successful films to be released in Australia. In its first eight weeks it grossed faster than Australia's biggest money earner "Star Wars", returning more than 3 million dollars in box-office.*

*It is producer Geoff Burrowes and director George Miller's first feature. Both began their careers at Crawford. Burrowes has also worked as a press secretary for Moss Cass and in advertising with Monahan Dayman Adams. Miller has been directing television series for more than 10 years. His credits include the historical series "Against The Wind" and "The Last Outlaw".*



*The director, producer Simon Wincer, producer Geoff Burrowes and director George Miller. Above: "The Man From Snowy River" (from Burrowes) and the same scene as seen by the film. Left: the three actors (from left: Clancy Gault Thompson) and the film "The Man From Snowy River"*



# Geoff Burrowes and George Miller

*Scripting*

When did you get the idea to film *'Snowy River'*?

Burrowes: I was talking to a publisher (about various projects) when his wife said, in a bored aside to the womanized conversation, "Why doesn't someone in the film industry do something that is central to Australia's heritage rather than always dealing on the edges of it?" I asked what she meant, and she said, "Take, for example, *The Man From Snowy River*. Why doesn't someone do that?" I jumped down her throat and said, "Oh, get out. It's too well-known. It's almost a cliché. Anyway, it's too short; it only runs five or seven minutes. How can you make a film out of that?"

Then, as I drove home that night, I wondered why I had rejected her idea so strongly. That's when I got the idea that the poem wouldn't make a film in itself, but what a superb seed for a film. So I flew around to George's place, rapped in the door and said, "Guess what? I've got a great one! All we need is another 90 minutes!" So, we sat down and plotted it out that weekend.

Miller: The idea came first from

## TWO MEN BEHIND SNOWY RIVER

*Interviewed by George Tosi*





Geoff's love of the mountains. I had also filmed there — probably more than anybody else — and had this soft, emotional feeling about the place. Certainly, I had very strong feelings about how the film should look.

So we applied what we knew of our craft to that concept. That is to what *Savvy River* owes its great success.

You had the ending, but how did you evolve the beginning and middle?

Burrows: We looked at the poem, but that gave us almost as clue as to what story might have preceded it. All one has is the gathering of a certain number of characters, and a wild and roaring horse chase.

came into money when Pardon was the Cup. But that's all we know.

The one we know least about is the Man from Savvy River. The only clue is that he is a "bad" and a "simpler." That, I guess, was the breakthrough. He's not every single artist's model of the Man was that of a brute, 50-year-old mature man with a heavy head. For some reason no one or very few, had picked up that he was a young boy, barely capable of growing him up.

Miller: He is referred to as a lad in the early part of the poem, and at the end as "the man." What does that tell you? That the ride is his passage into manhood, the defining act of growing up.

Burrows: Once we had those three characters, we decided we

needed to know a lot more about the Man from Savvy River, whom we called Jim Craig. We gave him that name because he is a fictional character. Pardon created him as a composite character based on so one individual. So we built the character of Jim Craig as Pardon had — from our observations of a number of mountain horsemen.

Another decision we took early on was that we would not show too much of Clancy in the film. He is too legendary, too big, and we felt he would not Jim. If we brought him in too often, it would become a film about Clancy.

At the same time, we wanted to know him as that legendary character, the catalyst who excites not only a psychological perspective on Jim but also a metaphysical influence throughout the film — something with Spirit. It was important that Spirit motivate Jim at exactly the right times.

Equally, the action with the horses and the cult is important in relation to what's happening to the characters.

Burrows: The horses aren't just props there because they look into

that third level part out of control, it wrecks your film entirely, but if you haven't got it, it makes it slight. It is these legends and attitudes in the characters which help one understand a little more about the culture. What values do these characters stand for? Or is it an attempt to express: What are the values of a hero?

Is it fair to draw a comparison between Jim and the leader of the brumbos?

Burrows: No, I don't think so. Some read over my gut off on that particular bit, but that's just work.

Miller: The brumbos are Jim's nemesis. Jim represents civilization, and the brumbos the mean-



There are only three characters mentioned in the poem: Clancy at the Overlook, Harrison and the Man from Savvy River. Frankly, we knew everything we need to about Clancy from the poem. He is already a legend, the consummate hero. As for Harrison, he is "the old man with his foot to what to snow, but few could ride harder than when he bleed was fairly up." We also knew that he certainly

needed to know a lot more about the Man from Savvy River, whom we called Jim Craig. We gave him that name because he is a fictional character. Pardon created him as a composite character based on so one individual. So we built the character of Jim Craig as Pardon had — from our observations of a number of mountain horsemen. Another decision we took early on was that we would not show too

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Jim Craig (Tom Burlinson) makes the long and short of the mountain life a reality about 1970. *The Man from Savvy River*

times in their original state. The conflict between the two, which is the central line in the film, is that people have to give the right to live in the mountains. Even people who know the mountains on a practical level understand that. It has its own truth.



Every time the brahmins appear, it's as a major function in Jim's life. Was that deliberate?

**Burrows:** Absolutely. The role of the brahmins, apart from the visual and specific plot aspects, is these second and third levels. We felt the brahms had to exercise a multifaceted and metaphorical influence on Jim's life. They are great barometers of change. Whenever we see the brahmins, something goes wrong, like Jim's father dies, or the situation with Jessica is broken up.

That brahmi station is not meant to be a lovable character. Otherwise, how the hell would you sustain the end of the film, which is a kid removing himself from their sacred freedom. You would alienate your audience altogether if the final scene is Jim looking up a bunch of men whose faces are going to end up in glue.

So, Jim becomes a man because he can control the children...

**Burrows:** Because he can deal the children. But, even then, I suspect it's taking things too far. It's not as if Jim, too, is a young man and he goes to fight the old males for the status. That's a bit of your Mayan/Mesoamerican stuff. It is simply that the brahmins are the epitome of a wild and free spirit which unfortunately antagonizes against man's efforts to control an environment. And, as not all people who go to films and not horses, we decided to come down rather squarely on the side of people wanting, not horses.

How long did it take to write the screenplay?

**Burrows:** It took us a weekend to get the first rudiments of our phantom authors and plot. Then we spent a year in plotting and developing characters. This is before we even went to script. We wrote about 15 treatments, many of them 40 to 60 pages.

One of the key things was that it was unheroic. We didn't try and force a treatment or plot by a deadline. It would have been foolhardy. Deadlines have to be considered a movable feast, if the object of the exercise is to make something worthwhile. So, we just kept working at it.

In the meantime, I would go up to Meringo and refer what we had talked about to Jack Lavick and the other mountain brahmins, and ask them for character insights. Jack used to take me around and introduce me to people whom I could use as character bases, drawing from the history and the traditions of the mountain people.

For example, the character of Jimmie, Jim's partner, is drawn directly from a wife who died in the early part of the century, in a road remote and beautiful valley of

the mountains. She is credited by aspects of character that stem from my wife's sister-in-law. Then, there are the purely inspirational elements. All the time, we were looking for historical models, life models and then adding our own perception of the qualities of the character.

Miller: Geoff looked after the authenticity of the mountains, while I looked after the overlay of character, the historical authenticity. This is why Jim is a very Asian person. It is historically accurate.

**Burrows:** Now, from the time to have a screenplay written, which conformed to our view of the film. There was no point having a writer do something that didn't suit us. I'm not interested in the writer as writer, that's a total waste of time. That is not to belittle a writer. It is putting him on the appropriate pedestal, but not on a pedestal in a different measure range to you.

Why didn't you take screen credit for your contributions to the script?

**Burrows:** We have credit in our own right. We don't need it. Those stupid, bloody credits of "Story by" or "Concept by..." often read like a pitiful cry for recognition from the unknown. Screenwriters get screen credits.

## Locations

Why did you shoot in Moosfield and not on location at Mount Kachibol?

**Miller:** It is more beautiful in the Moosfield area and it is home ground. They are very much our people. Geoff's father-in-law lives there, and he helped take us into those mountains.

Also, from a director's point of view, Kachibol doesn't look like a mountain—just a feature on a high plateau. When I went to look at it I drove right past. I instantly missed it.

Finally, Moosfield is logistically very convenient.

**Burrows:** Even before we went to a treatment, we were drifting in terms of what we knew and understood of the mountains in that district. To some extent the film confirmed to what we knew existed about the Moosfield area. Then, as we got on to the fourth or fifth draft of the script, we went there again on a road trip through the mountain area. We wanted to move to understand that we weren't being emotionally drawn to Moosfield, that we weren't having a bias trip and going for something we knew would be safe. But we couldn't get away a full's rate of Moosfield or any, okay scenes.

## Actors

How did you choose your actors?

**Burrows:** Sigrid Thorsness was cast as Jessica the day we decided we needed a romantic interest for Jim.

Miller: Sigrid and I have a long history, the first time I worked with her she was about 14. I also worked with her on *The Last Outlaw*. She is somebody whose ability I have watched grow as the material—though, of course, she's still very young. I just knew that she was the right person, and Geoff was convinced fairly readily.



As for Jack Thompson, as soon as we came up with the idea of Clancy, we knew it had to be him. It was fairly obvious.

The most important thing about the cast was that they had to have fantastic ability as actors. I didn't really care what they looked like. Sigrid is fantastic and she is beautiful—well, that's great. I probably would have cast her even if she wasn't beautiful.

The same goes for Tom. We were looking for an actor who would appeal to women, that was terribly important. Sigrid was the first person we cast, so we took her on all the ambitions for Jim.

**Burrows:** Sigrid sat through 45 screen tests and read a scene with each of the young guys we tested. And that 45 had been narrowed down from about 200, who had been chosen by casting agents. Well, Tom, just cast himself. The relationship that sprung between Tom and Sigrid was absolutely magic. It required no recent appreciation of the screen test, no discussion or intellectual games.

Miller: Again, an excellent tale vision training showed through.

What about Kirk Douglas?

**Burrows:** Kirk we had to work on a lot. Originally our idea was to have two Australian actors play Harrison and Spar. We talked about a dance scene, but we just couldn't get what we were after. There are good reasons why, particularly in the case of Harrison. He really is an extraordinary physical presence with an overwhelming, instantly powerful personality on screen.

Miller: Jim is Jim's protagonist, so the most powerful he is, the more powerful Jim becomes by overpowering him. Again, it is an application of work to acting.

**Burrows:** Harrison is an enormous number of stories, so we needed a very competent actor. There are competent actors in Australia, in that age bracket, but we



*Top: Sigrid Thorsness as Jessica; Miller and Spar. Above: Harrison and Jim. Bottom: Jack Thompson. The film from Jerry Blue.*

did not find that physical presence, that strength Kirk brings to a role. With Spar, we had a lot of difficulties in the road. We just didn't get close to what we wanted. So, at that stage, we decided to look overseas. That immediately raised the question of lifting the budget, but we felt it would enhance the marketability of the film at the distribution level overseas. It events out in the end.

So we had a clear choice: we could thank the animals at sub and

1. Moosfield Means is the name for The National Reserve Spill.



take recourse in the fortress mentality of "Let's do this, all-Australia because we are little Aussie Menzies" and end up with a second-class product, not through anyone's fault, but simply because of inevitabilities. Or we could do what we'd always intended, which was to do the best bloody thing we could and think outside of the fortress mentality.

When we started to think of Harrison, setting aside the questions of a dual role, there are few actors in the world with that amount of power who can play a 60-year-old. You can think of George C. Scott, Sean Connery, Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas, then you start to hiccup, close your eyes and cough. There's not many that you can get. The possibilities of the dual role restricted its own further.



*Living in the high country*

**What did you decide to make it a dual role?**

**Burrows:** While we were talking to Kirk in Los Angeles. At that stage, we had drafted Spar and Harrison as friends, not brothers. Then we thought it would become richer as drama if they were brothers.

**Miller:** Conflict is where drama comes from.

**Harrison seems in conflict with just about everybody in the film...**

**Miller:** Most especially himself. Burrows: Yet he is not intended to be a cruel man! He's not mean-spirited, he's just single-minded.

One of the essay contributions John Dooce made to the screen-

play was that he didn't want Harrison to be a cipher of a character. John wanted to make a statement about the kind of man who made Australia what it is today, irrespective of whether they were attractive or not—and most of them weren't. We were looking for the kind of person who laid the basis for the great agrarian industry upon which Australia depended for so long and to a large extent depends upon now. We wanted someone analogous to the Durandos and the Kilmours, the men who, in whatever cost, in blood and sweat and those around them, forged copper and built Australia.

**Are you happy with Douglas' performance?**

**Miller:** Absolutely. It's amazing. I can truly say Kirk was not

so about a year-and-a-half into the project we decided to get into bed with someone as brilliant as that, who could give us some credibility and whose involvement would help to justify the need to spend several million dollars.

Up to this point, we had had the whole range of risky purporting to be some adviser. People did us, like "Why don't you bring it in, like 'talent' or 'I think this is a great film as long as you keep the budget under \$750,000'." Can you imagine the frenzy of that advice? We kept getting it from so-called senior figures in the industry—filmists, academicians, like, "It is a mess!" from the head of one of the corporations. Holy Christ!

After a while, we realized these guys were playing in a different world. They're shots. You can't discuss, criticize or advocate against their kind of crap.

**Miller:** We carried the problem with geography, we went around them.

**Burrows:** So, the key thing was to involve someone with the right credentials.

Yeah, Susan Watson, who it is old friend of George's, ring in and said he'd been working with Michael Edgley for about three months. Michael wanted to get into film and television in a big way and they had looked at a lot of projects but none had excited them and they were keen to do a big project. This was at the very moment I had my finger pointed over the dual role people like Michael Edgley.

So, Susan and Michael came down, we talked, and in half-an-hour we had a deal. We also had working around it a splendid crew, with Susan as producer. George and I to make up the production team.

**Burrows:** The important thing is to determine whose film it is, and then you must make sure the film conforms to that vision. You must give them the film to take its own life and run. That is a recipe for self-redemption and disaster. So, we had to extract from Kirk his contribution—and it wasn't a question of extracting it. Kirk gives it to you—while all the time fighting to keep the perspective.



**What was Michael Edgley's involvement in the production?**

**Burrows:** Michael's forte is not in the real face. He's not a working producer in the sense that he gets involved in the actual production. What Michael brings to the production, firstly is an extraordinary amount of people like George and I obviously, have no track record—which I take to mean we have not failed five times in the film business. We lacked credentials.

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which had been thoroughly marketed. Marketing is a culture-bound and economic operation. Marketing is not just selling, not just promotion, not just advertising—it is all those things and more.

I have a good background in marketing but not in production and selling, and that's where Edgley is phenomenal. They have a professional infrastructure which is without a doubt the best in this country. We were not dealing with an ad hoc producer. The notion of a local producer in the only up to marketing is a joke. You make a \$2 million film and you spend \$30,000 on publicity? What kind of mistake is that?

Edgley worked full-time designing ad steps of publishing and promoting the film. We were able to produce the film. We had to develop a merchandising and licensing stream, an advertising stream, a publicity stream and all the other attributes of marketing.

Marketing is the difference between accepting that a certain number of people will see your film, no matter what, and taking the attitude that you are going to get millions of people to see the film for particular reasons. It has to do with the very nature of the product itself. If we had not made a product that was unusually marketable, then it wouldn't have mattered. However, our marketing strategy was. Marketing practice goes right back to what you're making and how you go about making it.

Michael Edgley and his organization was address to the development of our marketing approach.

**So, you tailor the film to a particular market...**

**Burrows:** Absolutely.

**And what is that market?**

**Burrows:** All Australians—the whole 15 million of them. As broad and as unambiguously as that.

New, the way we sought to achieve that was to attract the market and to make something of the film which would suit different audience segments. So we say, "Let's make that film as accessible to kids." That's important. Then, "Let's make it appealing to people who don't go to cinema." The cinema market is undergoing serious changes and there are vast numbers of people who do not go to cinema. Right, we have to get them.

By the same token, there is the very visible and effective core of the cinema market: the youth market. We could have something to do with them. And something is for the conscious and the family groups. You want a film that a mother and father can take their children to, not ending what they think is going to be good for their children but enjoying it them-

## Marketing

Another aspect of Michael's involvement, and this is really crucial, is promotion. The film industry in Australia knows little about promotion. There had never been a film made in this country



school. And their kids will go along with a view to enjoying it and not being forced to watch something that their parents think is good for them.

All this points you right-ender the proposition: That's where the script comes in.

Miller: Again, these things were involved at day five. This is where our background in television was a tremendous help. Television is a popular medium. You can't give it television. You don't have five flags in a row, you have one flag and that's it.

We have a very good track record in television — again, Crawford training. It is amazing the number of people from that place who come up traps. They just keep coming.

People who do very television do so at their own expense and at personal ignorance. I would defy 90 per cent of people who are making feature films in Australia to go and direct an episode of a top show, or *The Sullivans*. That would sort them out so fast their foot wouldn't touch the ground.

Burrows: One of the main things we are lacking in the feature business is an ability at the construction level, and television is essential. It has to be to survive. People like George emerge from the rock because they are adept at narrative, they can tell a story and tell it quickly.

Today's producers, and particularly kids, are visual rather than literary. They can take in an entire bloody massacre in 30 seconds off the box. Commercials set the standard by which we have to judge what the audience can perceive. The old days of taking 10 minutes to play a scene no longer apply. After 30 seconds, the audience is scratching its head. It knows what's going to happen, and you insult them by dragging it out.

Miller: When I was shooting *Savage*, I was very conscious that the visual literacy of young people especially at very high time is reflected in the pace of the film. I would say, "Okay actors, read it through." Then 10 seconds into it, I'd say, "Too slow, too slow! This is going into the shots. It's boring."

Burrows: We had a big disagreement about this one day, George. We were going through rehearsal for the dinner scene and I thought, "Oh Christ, this is a gallop." I told George he was going too fast, but he said, "Too fast, be boggled! I'm not going fast enough." Well, when we looked at the rushes, I noticed I was wrong. The lesson is get it with it, never long second.

Take the scene where Jessica is on the cliff and Jim comes along to rescue her. Everyone knows how to rescue her. Everyone knows how to rescue her. They have seen it a million times before. They know he's going to climb the cliff, that they are going to climb nearly all the way to the top and they're going to slip and, "Gosh!",

they've got, oh no they haven't? They know that.

Miller: The instant Jim slips you're on forest, and off every movie on to the next point.

Burrows: If the film is a testimony to anything, it is to two things: (1) talk and dialogue, and dialogue can be expressed in many forms, like intellectual wit, and (2) the rest, the rest, the rest, talent that has out there which has been passed over by the feature industry. This film is a first for George. For me, for Michael Edgely, for Simon Wilson as an executive producer, for John Dixon the scriptwriter, for Bruce Rowland the cameraman, for Keith Wapell the cinematographer, for Tom Bertram the actor and for the guys that handle the hardware — and so on down the line. We so often found that the people we wanted were those who worked without any preconditions to go and good day work, who hadn't been slapped on the back and told by their peers how brilliant and insightful they were. The ones who were best happened to be ones who had been passed over.

olds and screens "boring!", and 30 seconds later the stuff was out.

Burrows: On the cutting room floor is some of the most suspense, action and beautiful footage, but it had no place in the structure of the piece of entertainment.

Do you think the film has significance on a commercial level?

Burrows: Yes. That was something that we set out to re-imagine to achieve. But it is not, so simple as having, for example, "Walking Wounded" played in the end credits music.

Miller: I just heard the fully-orchestrated version of "Walking Wounded" when I had been away from home for eight weeks in the U.S. I surely wept.

For me, *Savage* is a love letter to Australia, and for Geoff, a love letter to the mountains. We can't understand why any filmmaker would want to depress an audience. If you want to get depressed, turn on the television and watch the news.

Burrows: The film has been out now for six weeks and we have had

That means anger about the film. Most Australian films tend to have very positive central characters...

Miller and Burrows: That's because they don't apply their craft!

Burrows: They don't realize what terms an audience as. The feeling we wanted to generate in the audience, when we beat those horses and "alone and abandoned brought them back", was that emotion of men winning the great final. When Carlton was a grand final, 20 players don't win it — hundreds of thousands of people win it. When Jim beats the horses, everyone is the audience wins.

Another thing is that we needed the pitfall of Ocklawaha, which too many people fall into in the early days of the Australian film industry, and indeed even in television. Nobody likes Ocklawaha. They are detestable characters. They have never worked at drama, and are box-office poison. So, it is important to make an Australian character as an attractive, not unattractive, light.

Another thing is that there are



What do you think the public is getting out of the film? Why is it so attractive?

Miller: One word: entertainment.

Burrows: That's what this film fundamentally set out to achieve. Anything that originated atmosphere was thrown out, without pain.

Miller: We'd stand at the Marri-

a tremendous web once response. In Adelaide, they clipped Jim when he was bringing the horses back. Unbelievable! They weren't clipping the film, they weren't saying, "Good job, boys", they were clipping Jim, the hero, winning and bringing the horses back. About because the film is intrinsically Australian — it is socially and culturally specific to Australia — when we win, Australia wins.

Filming the wild bush landscape: techniques of choice

many ways in which you can address the Australian character. A number of people in Perth and Adelaide articulated that to me in a way I hadn't thought of before. A couple of girls came up to me in Perth after the premiere and I asked what they liked about it.



They said, "Oh, it made me so proud to be Australian!" I asked who, expecting Murrumbidgee or Jim Keating or the horses. "No," they said, "it was the elements of beauty in Jim, the beauty in the script. For example, when Spar goes into the house, and he said, 'Thank you, Spar', you obviously felt it make a. He wasn't a smartie arte."

## Critics

**How do you feel about the critical reaction?**

Burrows: I think it is time for a cross-breed story. It is time the

such a heavy casting by his critic? It reflects badly on the paper because the critic is simply inaccurate. Not only inaccurate but untruthful.

Burrows: And one suspicious too, improperly motivated. Reviews in many cases have probably been artificially constructed before the film has been seen. That is the most perfidious aspect.

It is an unfortunate by-product of the situation that we remember the reviewers, not the critics — and so, unfortunately, do other journalists.

**Do you think that Australian critics are too critical of Australian products...**

Miller: They're ignorant, they're low-grade. They pick up the *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and use about a dozen words out of it. When they talk about the script being slight, they're talking bullshit.

Burrows: They haven't a clue as to what a script does. They are talking about lines of dialogue, not about the script. The script is what generates structure, pace, focus, feel. The film is frankly the script with pictures. The critics, as we have said, don't know their clay but the script itself is shoddy and ignorant. It is an embarrassment to make a good film out of a bad script.

Miller: If it is a successful film, it is so because the script is right. People who say the script is bad are wrong.

Burrows: You can't have full blame after full blame applying a film as weak into its commercial release unless they are powerfully moved by the story — that is, by the script. There is no room for the audience and the critics who dismissed as such as Noel Hollett, John Hoadle and Sandra Hall's is right, when there is such flagrant disappointment. The critics are conducting an informed appreciation, but that is applying a judgement on a high not a low case to be a judge. We have not gone out to make high-brow artistic statements. We have not gone out to philosophise. We have not gone out to change the way in which people think about the world. We have gone out to entertain.

When I was down in Sydney when I honestly cannot believe can the film. He even gets the character names wrong he called Harrison "Harrison", and he — and his sub-editor — can't even spell *Benjamin*.

Miller: And he called me Dr. George Miller.

Burrows: Yet that man is still employed by the paper, Chris! If we were that bad in our business, we'd never make another film. Thank Christ the audience has enough bloody sense not to be fooled by him.

Miller: The first function of any journalist is to communicate accurately and clearly. So I would comment anybody who wonders what the hell's going on journalistically in Australia to read the review of *Drat for Four in Clever Paper*!

It is an excellent picture, but I couldn't figure out what the fuck he was saying. Do people actually read the? It's very strange.

Burrows: Not in any film made in Australia have been made — and this is going to sound a bit pompous, but it's not intended to be — with the criticism that the paper has. The film breaks new ground in Australia in the way it intends to entertain. Most of the Australian film critics, both in the making and in the critical representation of it, has been more in the area of film as culture, film as art, than film as popular entertainment.

What has grown up among the critics is a reluctance to depart from tradition. Hence, you have the ratings and the meetings of the Melbourne critic who protest, perhaps too much, that Australian audiences aren't looking to see such a well-made film, which he thinks should be completely viewed. That is indicative of the depth of stupidity in a critic. I mean, who is the jury, him or the audience?

It is also unfortunate that he had his predecessor have fallen into the trap of simply viewing Australian film purely as culture, not industrial entertainment. The fact of the matter is, this is our daytime job. We don't have a paper read. We have to make it pay. We need \$3.5 million of their people's money wrapped up in this, and it's not for us to make profound statements. The only statement they want to see is a black ink.

Miller: One of my proudest moments was when Ken G. Hall and he thought the film was good. I don't think anybody has achieved himself to communicating the public as much as Ken G. Hall.

Burrows: George Lucas in the gap, but most of all, he's right. He knows intuitively where to apply his stick.

Miller: I think the most damaging thing to the Australian film industry has been the nature theory of the director, which is just a common-bulshit. A disaster is a part of a man.

Disunity in Australia has attacked the wrong sort of people. Everybody in the director as the member of the creative team of a film, the writer. So it attacks people who have got problems. Instead of "I'm just a rock star", it is "I'm just an film director". They are people who intuitively want to tell their own story that they start making their own stories.

**By the same token, you can do both.**

*Continued on page 213*

2 Star Review: *Cleaver Paper*, No. 21, pp. 145-170.



Miller and Jim. "One can say I don't automatically find most of the critics who dismiss us are wrong."

These, incidentally, are the very lines that our studio friends, the critics, kept on read. "How beautiful!" They just don't understand! They have no comprehension of what makes successful drama, successful entertainment. They are the lines that study fresh Jim out. When he is chopping the wood and he is serious about it, you can see there is a fundamental honesty and integrity in the guy.

That's one thing that Australians have always had in them: a sort of open-faced honesty, an ability to perceive gut-wrenching, but still precise in expression, a lack of cynicism. Australians have traditionally not become cynical, although I think we've taken a bit of a course in it of late. Our knacker syndrome is very cynical and bordering on the old cultural snipe.

But there are many aspects to an audience's response. Like the secretary being so beautiful it makes people proud to belong to a company that is as good.

Miller: We rejoice in just being able to zoom out and see, as one critic put it, half of Victoria. That critic mentioned this as a negative thing, but my heart leapt when I stood on top of that mountain. One person sees beautiful scenery as a cliché, I see it as a beautiful treasure.

film-makers got up and started to talk back to the critics who we have taken severely for too long.

A lot of film-makers — oh, that's a stupid term — a lot of producers and directors don't market their film. They rely entirely on the critics and, to this extent, they have to bear the blame, when they think do if they get bad critic.

We decided only on that this film would probably get a critical panacea. It didn't matter to us because we'd taken the decision to market it properly. So the critics must realize to us.

One can say, I think authoritatively, that most of the critics who dismissed as such as Noel Hollett, John Hoadle and Sandra Hall's are right, when there is such flagrant disappointment. The critics are conducting an informed appreciation, but that is applying a judgement on a high not a low case to be a judge. We have not gone out to make high-brow artistic statements. We have not gone out to philosophise. We have not gone out to change the way in which people think about the world. We have gone out to entertain.

But it's not all critics, incidentally. The majority of critics have don't say frequently, and some too frequently, with the film.

Miller: For me, it simply reflects badly upon the newspaper. They pay for it. If a critic says a film is what the general public goes a winking motion, and then goes away and shows a den that says something about the accuracy, variety and honesty of the critic, and about the integrity of the paper. How much the editor of *The Age* feel when the main popular film in Australian history is given



# THE LAW of Making Movies

Daniela Torsh

**A** one-day seminar for lawyers sponsored by the Australian Film Commission and the College of Law in Sydney recently had to turn people away. More than 160 applications for the seminar, "The Law of Making Movies", were received.

At the seminar, the general manager of the AFC, Joseph Skrzybnik, told the lawyers he expected more private investment in film in development of film projects and in marketing. These two areas had in the past been largely supported by government finance. He said,

"We would not expect them to continue. In early 1983, 25 features went into production between January and May. They had a total budget of about \$36 million. We expect the financial year, 1983/82, to be about \$35 million [budget total]."

"On the basis of that figure, allowing about 10 per cent to development costs, \$3 to \$4 million [is] spent annually on developing projects. In the past, this has been 85 per cent by government funding. We expect in future only 50 per cent government funding for development, with directors, writers and producers carrying the rest in difference, and investors picking the costs up down the line."

In his historical analysis of the film industry, Skrzybnik described the current tax incentives as an "introductory phase" with the help of attracting investors to the film industry and keeping them. He said, "We are in Phase Two — trying to find the right relationship between private industry and government."

The certificate system administered by the Department for Home Affairs was designed to avoid the problems of tax-based support, as seen overseas, especially in Canada where there was no restriction. "We don't want to be a bit parts industry with offshore operators who don't leave much behind", he said. It may be appropriate to introduce foreign elements, such as an actor or writer, into a film, but the virtual test of certification was creative control: is it Australian?

The certificate system was "not set up to lure overseas producers come in, put up a front of Australian control, write in the Opera House and knockdowns." (laughter)

Skrzybnik described a review by Federal Treasurer, John Howard, in June this year of the tax incentives. With the news published in the *Australian Financial Review* the day prior to the seminar that the incentives have to far cost Treasury an estimated \$24 million, 12 times the original costing by the then responsible Minister, Mr Elliott, the financial review could be a significant event for the industry.

Sydney commercial lawyer David Gonski explained the difficulties of using traditional ways of structuring investments to get the benefits of the new tax advantages. He said he was disappointed that the same approach had not been used in the film industry as in the mining industry where the person who creates a company share is eligible for the tax deduction in the film industry, because usually a company is the first owner of the copyright, as is the company which is eligible for the tax advantages.

Because of the problems under the New South Wales (and other states') Companies Act of having an investment structure with more than 20 investors (currently known as the "intended 14(1) problem") many films are going the Queensland/Mountville Act (from 1987) to set up their investment company. Gonski said it was spending and expense to have to fall back on this sort of device just in order to take advantage of the tax incentives. The problems he cited were:

- the limit of seven years' life for the company,
- the high costs of advertising to conform with the act,
- lack of provision for assignment, and
- doubt as to where liabilities and profits can fall.

The general feeling among the lawyers present was that the Corporate Affairs Commission would not set an action 14(1), but having more than 20 investors could mean legal problems with contracts with third parties.

This seminar was clearly of most concern to the lawyers present, who included Ian Skiffins and Lena Gloor of Melbourne, both "film lawyers" of some experience and co-authors of the *Cinema Papers: The Australian Film Producers & Investors Guide*. A guarded exchange of information ensued over rulings by the Taxation Department and the Corporate Affairs Commission, as well as over the meaning of an association under section 14(1). Gonski

pointed out that, "One can be associated without being an association under 14(1)". As one of the significant criteria for an association was mutual rights and obligations, to avoid 14(1) problems one should avoid mutual rights and obligations in the constituent structures in film production.

The other topical question discussed by Gonski's associates, Philip Chrusanski, dealt with prospectus provisions which cover offering film investments to the public. All three vaguely-worded advertisements, appearing lately in the press, may not escape the severe penalties of the companies acts he warned. The court looks behind the cover of the vague constitution at the whole process of what is given to people who apply to such ads and even to letters to select groups purporting to be an offer not to the public but to friends, say, of the promoters — even though they may never have heard of them. Skrzybnik "Concluded it" across the top, or even saying, "This offer is not available to the public", is not going to fool a court either, Chrusanski said.

*Continued on p. 201*

## 17 Contractual Steps in a Motion Picture by Tony Buckley

- Step 1 The Ops start
- Step 2 Writer's Contract
- Step 3 Contract with AFC\* for Development Funds
- Step 4 Contract with AFC\* for Production Funding
- Step 5 Contract with AFC\*, Distributor and Production Company
- Step 6 Contract with AFC\* Investor and Production Company
- Step 7 Contract with Actor's Equity
- Step 8 Contract with Companion Screenwriter
- Step 9 Contract with lead cast
- Step 10 General cast contract
- Step 11 Contract with composer
- Step 12 Contract with crew
- Step 13 Marketing, loan contract
- Step 14 Contract with approved agent
- Step 15 Contract with purchaser of film
- Step 16 The end, it is never really
- Step 17 Editors and Distributors priority

\* Or a State Film Commission

10 Screen decided to not release. Buckley challenged service provided to a bunch of French distributors. It had made production a contract. Agent from overseas, not sure.



IVORY, AUSTEN, RHYS AND OTHERS

# SOME OF JAMES IVORY'S LATER FILMS

Brian McFarlane

It would be a pity to write James Ivory off as a "literary" director. He has, somewhat daringly, a novelist's interest in and capacity for quiet, subtly-observed characterization; but he has none of the stiffness and self-conscious wordiness that are often the negative aspects of directors seen as having a literary bent. However, I would very much like to see Ivory (and his usual collaborators) address themselves to such disparate works as Jane Austen's *Emma*, E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and Martin Boyd's "Langton" novels. He has shown himself unusually sensitive to the infiltration of one culture or class by another, and to the phenomenon of transition within a culture. This would not be enough reason for wanting him to have a go at two classics of the language or at the home-grown pleasures of the Boyd chronicles of a vanishing class in a situation of conflicting cultural mores. The fact is that Ivory has exhibited a sensibility sufficiently acute to the nuances of others without losing his own distinctive voice in the process.

As one speaks of Ivory in this way, it is important to draw attention to the team which has been responsible for most of the films he has directed. With a fine arts background from the University of Oregon and as a graduate of the film department of the University of Southern California, he had some brief experience as a maker of short films before going to India in 1960. He formed there an enduring partnership

with the (real) filmmaker Ismail Merchant who has produced almost all of Ivory's subsequent films, and a perhaps even more important collaboration with Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, an American-born author of Polish-Jew extraction, because Indian on-screen, and she is the author (or, with Ivory himself on several occasions, co-author) of all but two of his feature films.

The Ivory-Merchant-Jhabvala team not surprisingly has access to a good deal of inter-



cultural understanding — not just, say, of Anglo-Indians, but of the phenomenon of cultural interpenetration at all the enmeshment of one culture upon another. This seems to me in conformity at home in Henry James' New England, under siege to European sophistication, or the conflicting theoretical colonies of present-day New York, or in the eclectic politics of dispossessed Indian princes.

So much about their films is so attractive that there is a temptation to over-value them. There is something consistently elevated, sensitive, and kindly about most of their films — or at least that I have been able to see, and I regret distribution-imposed gaps. Undermining support, their work remains persistently semi-elite (I am idiosyncratically and possibly wrongly reminded of that remark of Jane Austen's about working with "the little lot [two inches wide of ivory]," and it is hard to imagine it ever reaching a large popular audience). I am not suggesting that all their films are delicate little artifacts born to quick unseen, only that they seem less concerned with gratifying audience expectations than most people currently — at at any time — involved in commercial filmmaking.

In their 12 feature films, there have been no coincidences — no one seems to have much blood. *The Wild Party* (1974) set in Hollywood in 1929, an end-of-the-world account of a silent film comedian's decline, and *Quartet* (1981) offers little scope for the latter's usual fustian. Nevertheless, even in failed Henry-Melbourne-Balaban film will not be vulgar, crass, glib or facile. They are made as skilfully as poems. I'd rather see a hard Vincente Minnelli *Salome* as a grotesque, sloppy piece of latter-day John Ford, well below that master's best than in Ivory's films. He and his partners have the kind of quiet elegance and good taste that look staid and contrived when the critic gazes at a whole picture outside the range of their subtleties and temperance.

The two latest Ivories have sunk into Melbourne for facing riots, within weeks of each other. The newer film *Quartet* (a British-French co-production, was finished in early 1981), and had a deservedly brief success here at the Rivoli Cinema in February 1982. The earlier — and, apparently whittled by overseas reviews, more eagerly resisted — *Jane Austen in Manhattan* (a British-American co-production which opened in London in September 1980), has been given a two-week Melbourne run at the enterprising and pleasant Brighton Arts Two Cinema. Prior to these latest arrivals *The Europeans* (1977) had a solid success at several months at the Rivoli — the best Melbourne movie so far for an Ivory film — whereas *Hallucinations* over George and Emma's *Pictures* (1974) and the latter's masterpiece, *Autobiography of a Princess* (1969) interpreted a work's double bill at the Universal Theatre Picture in early 1980. Not exactly Star Wars equivalent in so distribution and popularity, but it is a little sad to think that such a sensitive work as the best Ivory seems destined to be peripheral to mainstream cinema.

It is one way or other, within or between cultures, or between Ivories's films have shown a persistent interest in exploring some of the subtle — and sometimes too-subtle — forces of explanation and manipulation that can color and muddy the waters of human relationships. Euphemias Muscular (Lee Remick) and her brother Feltz (Tim Woodward) set out consciously, and with a variety of motives, to woo their New England society the



W. J. Alexander (Alan Bates) and his 'self' in *Quartet*. Mirya Zell (Charlotte Cornwell) James Ivory's *Quartet*

Westworld in *The Europeans*. Cyril (Clive Brook), the English later in *Autobiography of a Princess*, knows that he was played upon by his master, the Indian prince. The three theatrical performers (Anne Baxter, Robert Powell and Michael Shenton) in *Jane Austen in Manhattan* are professional manipulators of other people, sometimes in the latter's interests, sometimes not. These films seem to understand that a degree of acquiescence on the part of the "victim" can make the latter an appropriate word for those being manipulated.

*Quartet*, the most recent film is clearly situated in the theme, and in other recurring motifs in Ivory's films. In recording a scene of transience, it is a triumph of decor, mood and metaphor. There is nothing postmodern in this 1920s Paris where the cast spends most of its time in cafes and nightclubs. It is as carefully to survive intact than the French eye or New England rightness under an invasion by Europeans.

But in *Quartet* nothing works except on the level of glittering surfaces. Unlike those earlier extensive images of societies in full cultural glory, *Quartet* offers essentially an example of the emblematic art. No flicker of real life, no rigor

or passion. *Quartet* is a study in excessive art direction. It may be that the Ivory film's sensibility is simply at odds with Jane Austen's sensibility. I have not read *Quartet* (and feel strongly advised not to), but these films never I do know: singular explanations of pre-occupied, depressed and depressing things and grace, seem to have little in common with the perspective, witfully, quietly ordered works of the Ivory team.

The latter may have been drawn to the exploitative (unprincipled) relationship at the centre of the work. The husband of Mirya Zell (Isabelle Adjani) goes to jail for snatching. She then is taken up by, and becomes well-reverenced with, H. J. Hinder (Alan Bates) and his wife Lois (Maggie Smith). Each of these plans, in his or her way, to exploit her — to seduce, she to cheat Mirya — but Mirya's plight seems almost purposefully designed to bring. She is not so much an engine (that could be maintained) as a cipher. Perhaps Adjani is simply too tacitly intended to suggest Jane Austen's autobiographically-based opinion of the scene. There is certainly more interest in the suggestion and deception than that *Quartet* between *Quartet* (and to be heard on Ford Machine Ford) and Lois and the very opportunistic way they practice.

Yet, even here, the film suggests locations that are suggestive of the novel film with those difficulties of some of authorial description and analysis. There is something lustily ironic and under-estimated in this authorial-looking and elegant account of times past.

In theory, perhaps there was the opportunity for an interesting tension between the muted glaze of Paris 1927 and the emotional violence of its theme. A tension, that is, existing that between the cultural luxury of New England and the realism, disruptive emotions at work in *The Europeans*. In fact, it doesn't work that way at all. The accuracy/disruption dichotomy was as organic in Henry James' argument as it is to Ivory's film, and the film kept finding cinematic ways of expressing the novel's central tension.

In *Quartet*, one's attention is constantly fixed on the muted interplay of the decor, and the expectation raised by the pacing score heard



James Ivory

1 Jane Austen's letter to her nephew T. Edward Austen, December 18, 1814.



over the opening distribution of the camera is never gratified. The film, certainly more interesting in its lovingly photographed address—where, the camera dwelling on artifacts which reveal revealing psychological and emotional states for example when Joseph Leroy made a tea-party scene in *The Go-Between* (only a statement on the decorum of a way of life, a discussion of odds with its emotional imbalances, in *Quartet* a coffee-party scene is just — and exquisitely — about coffee pouring. It is unexciting).

Everything then in *Quartet* is in part to look at. Nightclubs, restaurants, apartments, hotels, sterile, coldness, love, make-up: all are as perfectly conceived and executed as art direction can manage. (This is a disadvantage: every scene, by the way I find as the viewers begin over a breakfast table love with eggs and cups and croissants prior to eating to the pool where Mayra's husband is detained, one is aware of the stylistic effect of the contrast without having been emotionally so concerned about anyone. The film's subdued grey-blue look, chaotic, is a pointed and imperfect way. Why? usual blackness of mood, but Ivory and Co. have not been able to persuade us — perhaps not disappointing — that there is any grace for pathos, let alone tragedy, in the tedious, detached life of Mayra Zick.

**T**hough it seems to me the least successful, *Quartet* is still recognizably an Ivory film thematically at it concerned with contrasting ways of life, with consciousness, with relationships, relationships, stylistically, at his the usual accurate sense of place and period, and in usual in detail some subtle effective pictures (from Sarah Bernhardt) largely through Ivory's reliance on his writer's level, captured typically in close-ups and two-shots. That it doesn't work may be due to part to too static, as in say *Deluge*, rhythm, but mostly, I believe, because the film's makers appear uncomfortable in the last they put before us.

In the last's penultimate film, *Jose Astoriz* is

*Manhattan*, a year-and-a-half line reaching Astoriz, all these elements too seamlessly to make a witty and elegant counterpoint. The scene here for the manipulative power in the self Broadway theatre scene and the McGuffin is a recently-discovered piece of jewelry by Jose Astoriz — a melodramatic play, *Mr. Charles Goodwin*, based on Samuel Richardson's novel. The play is bought at auction by George Mulish (Nehemiah Wager), a modern-day Scrooge and character of a finally an individual which decides to give the play and a grant to stage it in Pierre Currier (Robert Powell), charismatic leader of the Manhattan Broadway Theatre Laboratory.

The film's central conflict is that between Pierre and his famous teacher and lover, Liliana Zorich (Anne Bancroft), who also wants the play and the grant to stage her own operatic version of it. A young girl, Amanda (Olivia Young), is drawn into Pierre's group — "kidnaped" by Pierre from her husband Victor (Kurt Johnson), a rising young musical comedy star. Ultimately Liliana drives off all Pierre's acolytes except Amanda, and, we understand, her production is to be performed.

The Astoriz fragment is about kidnapping, about the forcible manipulation of lives: "You shall be mine. Your fate is determined. I won you from my rival," says Pierre as the abductor in an imaginary episode from Liliana's production. At the final rehearsal of Pierre's audience/audience production, Pierre asks Amanda of the voters in "think of a kidnapping scene in your own life," and he perhaps he recall that he "forcibly took [her] away from home." Manipulation and exploitation are not the same thing but they are related, and here Pierre manipulates and exploitation are a parallel memory in her own life to achieve the respect he wants in that way. As Astoriz recalls their first meeting, the day he "forcibly took [her away]" from Victor, a flashback reveals Pierre conducting a workshop session in which the actors, making relationships, were then "split" apart at Pierre's command. He then asks with a smile: "How does it feel to be split from your other half?"



Amanda (Olivia Young) and Pierre Currier (Robert Powell) attend and under of the Manhattan Broadway Theatre Laboratory. Anne Bancroft Anne Zorich in Manhattan.

A certain degree of sympathy is no doubt not merely acceptable but necessary as a producer, but the film shows Pierre's influence going well beyond the rehearsal room. His young company, for instance, stands over the various scenes and says to him "too long as how to go?" and because "He needs it for all of us."

Yet, the film does not fall for the shade of making Pierre a wise stock figure — extensive theatrical advice, sending the young with modern costumes (and there is a leaning way the film would among the three layers of exploitation within the play (and within Liliana's imagined production) in the rehearsal scene where Pierre confesses he will let go, through his reading of the lines while the actors, reading, assume a puppet-like stance), and in the "production" of Amanda (and his props and in the contrast he places on the others ("I thought we weren't supposed to have personal attachments," says Anne (Nancy New), as the house but boyfriend's agency). Second, the actual performance by the laboratory group (staged in last by even more New York producers, Arthur Schnitzler), while Pierre seems to be, is clearly revealing and lovely, perhaps to make a treatment of a quite real situation in any other. Third, the film's business schematics in relation to Pierre by having him surprisingly seem to lose interest in the conflict with Liliana and so advise his players to work for her.

Liliana herself (Anne Bancroft) is knowledgeable, even or from All About Eve and back in roughly the same territory, manipulations her students quite as freely as Pierre. One of the film's strengths — specifically a strength of the *Manhattan* screenplay — is that it shows both Liliana and Pierre as actors with their idiosyncrasies, and neither of them is caricatured. She is seen observing and influencing a student trying to get out of emotional moments and, shortly after, talking with former student Victor, who suspects a conspiracy to keep Amanda from him. Claiming that "Pierre is a devil" — the most destructive person I ever knew" (and the film does not give evidence for this) Liliana says Victor with, "We must help each other. We'd have to fight him." He just Amanda back. The point is that Liliana is motivated by a wish not to help Victor or Amanda than to get back at Pierre who has



Mayra and Lila Pierre (Mayra Zorich) who desire to join Mayra. *Quartet*





Anne Bancroft as Liliaana Zerkow: "All the style and cheapness I had." — *James Ivory in Manhattan*

...the 40 years of Hollywood's golden age is expected to

accused her of "doing shabby third-rate plays" and downed her love for him with his dim wit. Why (Charles McCaughey) is baffling. Fanny has their married her both as a professional and as a woman.

The only immaturity that no one seems to mind — and it is part of the film's generosity about the cinema, and its variety, to include this — is that ill-considered is the cinema for Victor's musical comedy. Here we are again in the brief scenes devoted to this show in a generous air of devotion to the realism derived by the choreographer, played by Michael Shuman in a satirical sketch of Bob Fosse (or of Roy Scheider or Bob Fosse). It is during the party following the successful opening night of *How He Are Again* that Pierre, through the space of Annette's glossy following, finds Katie (Kathleen Boudry), a mysterious Annette away from Liliaana and Victor.

Liliaana's methods are less measured than Pierre's but they are just as calculated. They are seen at their most successful in a scene with George, which begins with her saying, "After subliminal and economic," in close-up in response to George's feeble defense that, when he is with Pierre, he is convinced that Pierre is right. In a virtuoso shot, the camera circles a almost 360° pan which dramatizes the idea of Liliaana's scrutiny of George, as she, replying to his assurance about a childhood suicide buddy, tells him with a promise to "help him light bigger boys." At this point the factory opens sequence denotes that Liliaana is a single mother her god, the suggestion of her immense mastery over Pierre signified by his jangling the abductor role in this imaginary performance. She has won George by playing mother to him, in contrast to her usual of any maternal element in her former feeling for Pierre.

One by one she wins Pierre's followers to her purpose, as she watches Annette's last, she complains that Pierre is using and leaving her, whereas "I could make something of you if you'd let me," smiling out Katie in the cafe where she sings, Liliaana seduces her with "I'm sure, as sure, you could be a great dramatic actress" and "I can't pretend I won't like you at one time" (as we see, here, under the actress in Buster's daughter by John Hedges).

Part of the film's success is the superbly-assured playing of Anne Bancroft and Robert

Fosse as the chief theatrical gurus and manipulators. She has all the style and sharp sense — and, it must be said, warmth — that 40 years of Hollywood's golden age is expected to bring, and she uses them to dueling and sometimes touching effect. On a bare dark screen, her head rises up from the bottom of the frame as if from below in an imaginary audience, and in this gesture, and in the way she walks across the empty stage and surveys the audience, one feels that these 40 years have not been wasted. The older woman is lost with the young man who uses this freedom with her, as a character type for sympathy, but while Anne Bancroft achieves this it is not at the expense of Liliaana's more calculating elements.

Fosse is equal to the challenge of this performance and it is important to the film's multi-layered tensions and conflicts that he should be so. Whereas Liliaana is all expansive "theatrical" gestures, Pierre's charisma is a matter of the eyes, of a looking address, and Ernest Vincent's career knows exactly how to

deal with each. But though the two stars properly dominate, the career cast — mostly youthful, mostly unknown — is a pleasure to watch and listen to. The young ones are laughing as they try to sort out their goals and allegiances, the older ones cringing, without resort to caricature, as they watch from Pierre's production.

In fact nobody emerges as a caricature. There is a pervasive warmth and generosity about the writing, the direction and the playing that resists stereotype and amplifies, and some other some resonance with intimations of real experience. There is, for instance, a beautifully-played scene between Victor and Jane (Tina Cloutier — Clifton in *The Europeans*), in which we rightly laugh at Jane's line, "Pierre wants me to play the depregnant as a 19-year-old," but can still see there might be a sense poem to Pierre's interpretation. And we can feel for Jane as he tries to work out the way "Pierre has that effect on people" as Victor recalls how Annette had come so wholly under his spell. This gets a deeper emotional rising from Victor's recollection of how they had first come to New York together, determined to make it as the theatre she had been so "rebellious" and, "The way she is about this [the play] is how she used to be about me." The film is suddenly very affecting about young lives and plans gone awry.

Like all the Ivory films I know, *Just Another Manhattan* has a very clear sense of place. This is not Woody Allen's Manhattan we are given here but it is just as real and, in its own way, just as romantic. Avoiding the usual Brooklyn-side view of the Midtown skyline, Ivory, and it must be said, the extraordinarily delicate outer photography creates images of rubbished-street streets, bookshops, restaurants and others, late-afternoon skyscrapers glimpsed through studio windows, that are a constant reminder of these inside, outside and art direction (Jeremiah Kucanov) combine in a dramatically potent way. The Laboratory's rehearsal room, Liliaana's studio and apartment, George's elegant dining-room, his loft accidentally stuffed with valuable artifacts, and the low-rise cafe where Katie sings. The way places look at the film — and every film — a part of the way the film means, creating. Moments are suggested through the film's architecture, utterly confident attention to details of the environment of which the characters are convincingly both witnesses and producers.



Tom Woodward as Pierre in *James Ivory's The Europeans*





Shashi Kapoor and Lucia in Janez Jurety's "Only son of India's commercial cinema" *Bombay Talkie*

As the camera tracks through and above Bombay streets, western music is heard as the soundtrack. The credits for *Bombay Talkie* (Jurety's 1973 film, first announced as a series of huge film advertising boardings stuck up in these very streets — and a red London bus strangely appears. The recurrent, thematic motif in the engagement of one culture on another is thus announced in the outer, visual and aural signposts explicitly, but also subliminally, preparing the ground for the film's international emotional resonance.

"We were too much, but you must have had a lot of difficulties," a foreigner tells Lucia. Lucia (Lucia) (Jennifer Kendal) questions about her future. Lucia, a best-selling American novelist with four bestsellers behind her, has just written a book about Bollywood and has come to Bombay to write her next. Self-centered, vain and realistic, Lucia is drawn to Han (Shashi Kapoor), an impoverished aspiring writer (his play is "symbolic of pre-modern India"), and to Vikram (Shashi Kapoor), the handsome, successful star of a series of fashion-looking films.

Han is the most sympathetic of these three central characters, but even he, in his soulfulness and apparent idealism, wants Lucia's interest in and support for his work, and his several intimacies towards her are not much different from Vikram's. He simply wraps them up in more poetic utterances. Vikram can never seek a career, especially a triumph model which often gives views of his film star's face. Used to women's adoration, he has stopped offering anything durable in return. He embarks on what seems a passionate affair with Lucia but it amounts to no more than "playing Catching Adults".

In the end, he tells Lucia, "the party's over." His vanity has been gratified but she has not been able to touch him emotionally, and she turns her about going back to her "nice little, dark hole" with Vikram. A night between a film scene of western sophistication (glanced from the movies and from women like Lucia) and the marriage to Han who has not yet yielded a son ("a light [his] funeral pyre"). He covers it

characteristically for himself and his status, not for another person.

But the center of the film is Lucia, and Jennifer Kendal is in a superbly-written role by the throat and nose. She understands perfectly the compulsive politeness of this woman who repudiates other people — Han Vikram, even her daughter at school in Switzerland — and, indeed, India as large as being there for her grandfather. She tests the bearded Han by, for instance, asking him to stop up her dress as he goes asking her about the "very handsome" actor whom he pretentiously despises, and she has no intention of responding to Han's passion for her. She exploits this, just as she exploits Vikram's supposed love for her, because it suits her inclination in the time.

Jennifer Kendal shows us nothing of Lucia's exploitativeness, or her arrogant superiority about other India or the "decadent West", or her vanity. Equally, though, she ensures that the audience will see the film's dual drama in her crumbling compassion. Clearly angry, extremely disappointed and confused, she is increasingly a pitiable figure. Both love and the severity she has unconsciously imposed she may find in India while her. She is at odds with the middle-class Indian ladies who have lived a mild blind peace with their gods, her failed attempt to join in their charming signifies how in odds she is with their ceremony. As for the two men, she all but

wrecks the foolish Vikram's career and his marriage, and she finds Han in the unexpected violence of the film's ending.

Jurety has always chosen his actors with careful regard to focus and Jennifer Kendal is equal to the demands the career makes of her. Lucia is aware that she is still attractive, but in fleeting moments of display the awareness of increasing middle-class in their elsewhere. Kendal responds with wonderful economy to Lucia's — and the cinema's — demands for suggestion of timidity, shyness, superiority and vulnerability and her performance is a performance of remarkable detail and simplicity that owes as much to the actress as to her director and writer.

In spite of the exceptional central performance, *Bombay Talkie* is not one of Jurety's major successes. At 135 minutes, it is perhaps a quarter-hour too long, but its chief fault is its total and structural unwieldiness. It begins as a lively satire of India's commercial cinema, with its Hollywoodian aspirations to lush Bollywood production numbers as Vegas melodrama, but doesn't subsequently capitalize on this. That is to say, the film fails to put together tightly enough the fresh consciousness of the Indian cinema (inspired by a misunderstood notion of Hollywood) and the romantic struggle in which a much tougher, more timeless woman influence goes dramatically to work on two Indian lives. It needs a more rigorous structuring for these two chief concerns to be seen as deriving from the same postulate and therefore as offering a contemporary one such other. Further, the time-wobles from the strongly satirical to what is, for this reason, a rather strange seriousness, what is needed is a more pervasive bias.

*Bombay Talkie* is by no means a failure as it is just less seen-felt and less resonant because its levels of interest than one expects of a Jurety film.



Lucia (Jennifer Kendal) in the film as Janez Jurety's "Inevitable atmosphere" *Bombay Talkie*



Lucia (Jennifer Kendal) in the film as Janez Jurety's "Inevitable atmosphere" *Bombay Talkie*

The indisputable masterpiece to have emerged so far from the Jurety-Narayan-Bhattacharya stable is *Pravara* (1977). In just under an hour, a whole life and a whole stretched way of life are revealed with understanding, compassion and economy.

Beyond the credit in the camera gracefully spans and tracks up and down, to left and right, through the halls of an Indian palace, moving here a portrait of Queen Victoria, there some traditional dancing. The scene cuts to the cluttered interior of a Kashiwan sparsely furnished by a two large chandeliers and a large portrait of a decorated Indian prince, there are



also a Indian tea-table, and—casually—a film projector and screen. An Indian lady finishes dressing, and a dandy-dad youth, taking to her with a disquiet in his mouth, re-enters the apartment. The Indian scene is echoed by the narrow window which here give or in other apartment blocks, those contrasting with the polished spaces of the Indian scene. In narrative terms, the obvious question is: What is the connection between this two opening sequences? Ah, one feels confident, this is to be a tale of transience and decline—and so it is, but it is also more than this. The other narrative question is: What are those preparations (the tea, the screen) for?

In the third sequence, an elderly visitor in western dress arrives to be met on the stairs by the Indian lady whose hand he kisses. She is "My dear Princess," he is "Cyrl Solih," and in her servant-like but they drink a toast to his father. A pervasive air of ritual is confirmed when she says "Everything's ready for the annual toast." The annual toast is a sharing of the memories of the old days in India, memories evoked by home movies of life in the Princess's father's palace where Cyrl was born, and, this year, further recalled by written, mounted "Indian memories" with disheveled Indian aristocrats, partially describing the loss of their power and position.

The Princess maintains a running commentary during the home movies ("Papa loved sweets and ice. He never spared expense," etc.), only later commentary and the movie reconstitute a narrative and aesthetic past. But, as she chatters on, we are aware of waiting for some further tension to develop. Cyrl, much slightly open, ready to laugh to please the Princess, kind, deferential, at first seems no more than an audience, a catalytic presence for the revision of the glory that was India. Interestingly though, it is clear that the Princess is secretly divided between these two faces (and the movie), and a new tension enters the film as the Princess urges him to write about her father and their way of life.

From this point, it is apparent that the film is as much—no more?—colored with Cyrl Solih's lost life as with the Princess's. He has spent years in patient, unobtrusive research for a book on one Daga Levar, "the Englishman in India," but a different sort of Englishman who knew a different India from Cyrl Solih's. As the Princess's prompting, he begins to remember and his numerous private pain as well as nostalgia. "I know I was living in a world of luxury," and the picture he calls up is one that is as well as association.

This is a film which seeks out to describe it in detail in the hope of making its pleasures rival to more than the small audience one here actually sees the film. It is not possible here to do more than suggest that gradually Cyrl Solih emerges as the other, the one who is quiet, thoughtful and growing apathetic as at the heart of the film that as we watch him stirred, politically at first and then, actually, by the home movies, we realize Ivory's Chetaniya still in seeing the traces of scenes where nothing much seems to be happening, and, perhaps above all, that James Mason as Cyrl Solih is giving the performance of his career and indeed one of the most striking performances of the career. Frightfully shy, without any driving purpose, with a deferential still for the Princess, Cyrl Solih is a man trying now to live with dignity in quiet adversity. The annual toast means something different for him from what it means to the Princess.

For him, it recalls the prosperity of his Indian life, not just the luxury and status he no longer enjoys and which is what it means to the Princess. For Cyrl, the movies create a memory



Cyrl Solih (James Mason) and the Princess prepare to drink at old film of India. *Autobiography of a Princess*

of India of appealing host, of compromised crowd, of mythical and mysterious atmosphere (swirls and bursts now all mixed together in his mind), of the idea of dancing with no longer in their first youth, of the transience of so much within the life of an Indian princeling and of the painful transition from that traditional Indian way to the harsh facts of the new. But above all, the movie force Cyrl—perhaps but insecurely—in to examine his life in India and his association with the Princess's father, the Maharajah.

As the camera pulls back to show Cyrl Solih surrounded by artifacts belonging to the past, the Princess asks him why he did not speak up for her father when he was involved in a London hotel scandal (A flashback showing this is the one climax point in the film.) Cyrl replies that he "was only an Englishman who had stayed in India too long," and was therefore powerless in the crisis, a sorry part of the answer. The truth lies in the complexity of his relationship with the Maharajah: remembering his father-in-law's status, he had nevertheless let himself be induced by the offered luxury, lured by the Maharajah on foot of the English (for being so good in games, for being a "sportsman"), he has also reasoned "the most difficult personal situation from the Prince" (e.g., at the time of his mother's death). In the end, it doesn't matter much to us what the Maharajah was like, what does matter is that Cyrl Solih's life was wholly compromised by him as he moved unperceptibly between generosity and cruelty. In the present, Cyrl has been irreversibly reduced, until now he has "research, writing, and walks by the sea."

What has been revealed is not so much the autobiography of a princess (wonderful though Madras Solih is in the role) but the reluctant autobiography of an Englishman who had stayed in India too long. Ivory and Bhattacharya have achieved a subtle triumph in making us aware of the texture of the life behind this greyed-out, elderly man for whom the Princess pays notes for him to take home. It is his western life, in one way, but has been utterly shaken up, and Ivory and Bhattacharya, with flowing precision and tact, dramatize the manipulation by his friend/master/perhaps lover, and his own acceptance of the transience of all existence.

The persistent Ivory concern is all best told, as Cyrl Solih walks off into the grey English twilight, not in left to re-engage and's view on film narrative and film art. An elderly man, a younger Indian woman, but not, chats, wishes home movies, recalls what was and adjusts to the diffusion of what is—and the result, as I began by saying, is a masterpiece, certainly one of the most nearly perfect films of my experience.

When I first saw *The Europeans* (1975), it was my introduction to Ivory and Co., and I concluded my review<sup>1</sup> by saying "The technicians clearly in tune with what they are doing and the result is a controlled pleasure indeed." Having seen most of the other Ivory films since, I am happy to stand by that judgment; it was meant to suggest that James' stage of artistry—as an individual and culture—is in my opinion to Ivory. In fact, those interests in the way people exploit each other, in the way one culture works on another, are as I have shown, evident in Ivory's work. In the case of *The Europeans* he has met the challenge of a man and emerged with credit, because he told (Ishwari) are emotionally in tune with the original, whereas they appear to be told us in the case of that minor misadventure *Juan Rios in Charge*.

A great author's type, the most intractably individual aspect of his achievement, tends not to be susceptible to visual translation. It would be surprising if it were. Other film versions of James' novels—William Wyler's handsome adaptation of *Washington Square* as *The Heiress*, Jack Clayton's *The Innocents* (from *The Turn of the Screw*), and Peter Bogdanovich's *Paper Moon*—have all been intelligent and stylish films. Nevertheless, they have not found it easy to strike a visual equivalent for the film scene existence of James' prose, and in consequence, the subtlety of his dramatics sometimes eludes them. Ivory, Ishwari and Merchant in *The Europeans* have come near

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1. *Cinema Papers*, No. 26, February-March, 1980 pp. 41-44.







# HEAT WAVE

## Director Phil Noyce talks to Arnold Zable

How did "Heatwave" develop as a film?

The film was originally conceived by two architecture graduates, Tim Gooding and Mark Stiles. When I got to the script it was called *King's Cross*. Tim Gooding was no longer working on it and Mark Stiles had done several drafts by himself. That was in December 1978 and, at this stage, it wasn't set in a basement at around Christmas.

Although the central character was an architect, a consideration of the dilemmas facing a contemporary architect was not so important to the screenplay as its political elements. For better or worse, I encouraged the screenplay to take the dilemmas we see in the final film.

Mark Stiles worked with me on a number of drafts, and then Mark Rosenberg came into the project and worked with us. Eventually, Mark Stiles felt that the screenplay reflected more of our taste, that is of Mark Rosenberg and myself, so we decided, originally, to take the principal responsibility for it.

To what extent was the film inspired by recent political events in inner urban Australia, particularly the disappearance of artist Jaseela Nether in the mid-1970s?

Many elements provided inspiration for the screenplay. The disappearance and alleged murder of Jaseela Nether is perhaps the most underreported and well-known element. But just as important were such disparate events as the Hilton bombing, the crash of the Nagai-Hand bank, the death of Frank Nagai and discussions I had with dozens of people.

Obviously, Mark Stiles felt not to make a comment on the disappearance of Nether and the disappearance of one particular street, but I felt that the film had the potential to be about a whole city.

Why is reflected in the film by the emphasis on creating the atmosphere of the city. These symbols and atmospheric scenes seem to be just as important as the scenes...

In Sydney, we are constantly scandalized by stories of alleged corruption, big business wheel-dealing and crime that are allegedly being done between politicians, merchants, sportsmen, scientists, and legislators. It is always going on, it is a very poisonous city. People are always looking over their shoulder and wondering who is up to what. And nobody, throughout all this wave of almost personal racism, has been able to put it together. I didn't want to put it all together either, because I thought if no one else has been able to, why should I presume that I could?

What I find interesting about all this is the atmosphere that seems to be so prevalent in Sydney, the presence of contemporary Sydney, where everyone has a little piece of information, but nobody has all the pieces that make up the jigsaw.

The film attempts, therefore, in its structure of almost clipped meetings and in its visual style, to evoke dramatically from social realism — that is, a realistic representation of characters and events — through to a much more distorted type of surrealism.

The surrealistic aspects, created by elements such as the male and the camera movements, seem to be part of your attempt to emphasize a city existing in a haze...

Yes, the music plays a very important part in the evocation of atmosphere, so do the camera movements. A number of pieces of music were recorded at guide tracks before the film was shot, and played in the crew and myself while we were shooting so we could sort of get into the same rhythm as the music we had played.

Eighty-five per cent of the film is underscored by music of one sort or another, and the composer, Cameron Allen, the sound designer, Greg Bell, and myself had a very close relationship. We considered all the elements together in planning the whole soundtrack — that is music and sound effects — rather than the latter working independently of the other.

I suppose one of the chief reasons why a mood is created, and again it is tied up with an attempt to create the feeling of paranoia, is the creeping camera, which is almost like someone tip-toeing through a place he is not meant to be in.

You may have noticed that one of the visual motifs is a converging camera, but it is not a fast converging camera. It creeps forward slowly, which of course underlines in the final shot of the film.

These effects are approval. The film has an almost hypnotic rhythm and a lot of care has been taken as the structure. Australian film-makers have had, I think, quite a deal of trouble with structure, a difficulty in sustaining a rhythm...

This is something about which I am well aware. One of our original ideas, conceived in conjunction with our director of photography, Vince Monahan, was that with every scene of the film the size of each of the characters in the frame should change. The film should start out quite loose — and, of course, a loose frame doesn't communicate tension — and then slowly creep in. This way the tension builds up, until the last section of the film, which was to have been shot on long telephoto lenses that isolated the characters from their background.

I would also stand away from that because we had gone to a lot of trouble to shoot certain charac-

terizations by using close and small cameras within the frame so that our story I felt that if we started to reduce the focus from the background, we would lose something we had been striving for. To convey the idea that people's actions are influenced by the decor and architecture of the rooms in which they live and think. So, in fact, we didn't follow those original ideas through as far as we could have.

By these visual elements I take it you are referring to settings, such as the head office of Heatwave's employer, which had tiger rugs, and Kate Dean's flat...

Yes, and her clothes, which may not be so readily recognizable to a audience outside Sydney. The T-shirt she often wears, with the Waratah emblem, comes from a very exclusive boutique. Although she has set herself up as a member of the lower classes, there are visual hints in the first half of the film that she is in fact from a middle-class background. Viewers who are conscious of a contrast would realize that she was not wearing a \$1 T-shirt, and could not have, therefore, been genuinely a part of that working-class milieu.

Although these visual clues are present, on the other hand they are offset by the fact that she actually seems to be very uncomfortable in middle-class settings. In this respect, I was struck by the similarity between Judy Davis' performance in "Winter of Our Discontent" and in "Heatwave" — this feeling of her being out of place in more wealthy surroundings...

Yes, but she is playing a character who is caught in a class vacuum. She has rejected her middle-class background and is trying to identify with the working class, which she would like to adopt. She is trying to change her spots, and a leopard can't do that.



So her chief characteristic would be her alienation....

Yes, very much so. In fact they say the very words that finally provided the basis for Judy's performance. Judy told me, "I take it that what you are aiming for is to show my journey in the film as a journey towards total alienation." She stressed it as better than I could have.

That puts the relationship between her and Stephen Ward in a interesting perspective....

Well, he is on a very different journey. He is, in a sense, an opportunist, an upward mobile. They collide at Christmas, then everyone goes back to their real lives, whether they are living in a luxurious Harbour-side apartment or a tenement house in the inner city.

I often meet people who come from quite opposite backgrounds, and I am attracted to them for all kinds of reasons, they tend to have a certain magnetism.

To what extent does an actress like Judy Davis assume autonomy for the role? How strongly does the force of her own personality and acting style come through?

Judy Davis is a star. She will always be different, but she will always be Judy Davis. I think that

when we look at her, we suspect we dislike her. For me, *Nevada* Brown is similar.

But the real question you are asking is how much autonomy does an actor have? Under my direction, an actor has as much autonomy as I can give them. No one director, as far as I am concerned, is ever going to be able to come up with more ideas than any two actors. An actor studies his or her character, tries to work out a logic for the behaviour as detailed in the script, and tries to communicate, perhaps, a lot that is not written in the dialogue. Actors try to make sense out of the proposition as journey they are asked to undertake from the first to the last frame.

The director acts as the facility for actors to study the background of their characters — talking about what they would have come from, where they will be in 10 years, what school they came from, their religious, what they have studied, the jobs they have done — all those sorts of things. If it is a professional interior, such as is Richard More's case, in acting the role of an architect, I would encourage him to undertake a fairly detailed study of architecture and meet a lot of architects.

Sure, you would like all your actors to take fight — that is to exhibit the role, to bring it over — and I guess Judy is more person-

ally than most actors. It is not that she is more dedicated, but that she doesn't become the character. She goes through a metamorphosis as she approaches a role. You can feel that the tensions running through her body are quite different as she approaches each film.

Richard More had a much more subdued, passive role in comparison to the one played by Davis....

Richard is playing a character that is the antithesis of the machine that we have come to expect in cinema. Most of his scenes take place in his mind. He is not a strongly physical person. The experience of working with Richard was a very pleasant one.

Peter Hootman seems to be a character for whom, despite his involvement, you have quite a deal of sympathy. He has a flexible human aspect....

That is deliberate. It was written for Chris Hawwood. In Mark Stiles' first screenplay the developer had been conceived as 55, balding and Jewish — the stereotype of a real-estate developer. But it is certainly not true of the Sydney scene. Most of the real-estate developers, some of whom I know quite well, are under 40. They are extraordinarily likable people, and very dynamic.

What we didn't want was for the

files to become a predictable goodness versus badness adolescent episode — the bad real-estate developer and the good lower-income workers who are his victims. Life is a lot more complex than that — although frankly, perhaps, it boils down to black and white. But there is hell of a lot of grey in between.

We deliberately set out to make the alienating most of the audience would identify as the bad guy as the most attractive character in the film. The audience there would be uncertain in their reactions to this character. So, although they might like to hate him, they cannot help but like him.

There were a couple of characters who did seem stereotyped: Bertie Lee, the King's Cross prostitute, and Dick Molnar, the shady strip-club owner....

I suppose these characters could have been more developed, but they deliberately weren't. Molnar, the strip-club owner, is a mythical figure in Sydney. Stories of Mr Big and Mr Big are always around in that scene. We are always hearing stories that such and such a guy runs the brothel scene, and such

*Judy Davis, Richard More and director Phil Haynes on location for *Nevada**





and each a guy runs the drug scene, or that this guy is the king of crime and that vice. And all the kings of crime are shadowy figures about whom the public knows very little. We sometimes see their pictures in the papers, and there are allegations made about their associations with people.

We tried to make the character of Molnar a stereotype, someone as he reproduced the average Sydneysider's relationship with a Mc Sen — a man who doesn't care, but about whom not much is known.

Barbie Lee is the one character we inherited from the original draft. This Gendry worked on *Is the Sex* and I think I have met a lot of Barbie Lees. They are stereotypes because heroin does strange things to people in that have a subject tend to not in simple ways. I am not suggesting that heroin leads people to commit murders, but there is a uniformity about their characters, their obsessions and their speech patterns. So, I would say that she is a justified stereotype.

**Why have you chosen to be in *King's Cross*?**

Most of my friends live there. I am a bit like Kate Winslet. I sort of share neighborhood relationship with people, unlike those who move from one suburb to another.

I have lived all over Sydney, and in some beautiful places like Palm Beach. But I really like being a restaurateur and living an inner-city life where people can meet and talk, and get on know each other. Also, I find that *King's Cross* is a source of enormous energy. It is the place where everyone in the country goes to get their rocks off in one way or another, whether they come from Broken Hill or Darwin. It is the focal point for a certain type of energy — it is all focused on that strip in *King's Cross*. I live just over the hill from there, which means I don't have to encounter it — I live in a quiet street — and you can drive from it.

**Did you actually grow up in Sydney?**

I grew up in Griffith, in the Murrumbidgee irrigation area, which is not your average country town, in that more than 50 per cent of the town is built on irrigated land. The town is also surrounded by small (unsubdivided) lots of 20 hectares lots. So, it is a much more European setting than a normal Australian country town.

I moved to Sydney when I was 12. My father was a lawyer and a farmer, he grew up on a farm, but made most of his money as a lawyer.

**Are you drawn towards a subject not in an area like Griffith?**

Not particularly. Sometimes you think of an idea and you want to

make it. At other times someone gives you a script and you can't put it down. The next film I am going to do is called *The Umbrella Woman* and it was just such a script. It was given to me by Margaret Kelly, who wrote the screenplay for *Poetry Blues*, and it was written by Peter Krass, the Australian playwright who wrote *The Word God*.

In many ways, it is a sort of Antonioni *Madame Bovary*. It is about a woman's need to attain total fulfillment in what she perceives as being a road or a gap. She has her ambition on a philosopher who won't her and thus rejects her. She pursues him religiously and relentlessly.

It is set in 1918 in a small northern New South Wales logging camp, but of course the emphasis is on the universal. So it is going to be quite a different film to *Blueways*, *Newsfront* or *Blackouts*.

In the films you have made, despite their different styles and structures, there has always been a fairly significant political content. You seem to be trying to get across certain social values. Do you find a conflict in the ways in which you have to commercialize and dramatic lives to make a marketable product?

Yes, of course. It is a conflict, and it makes films on these subjects difficult to finance and to a lesser extent, to get audiences to see. Whether we like it or not, cinema, as opposed to television, is primarily used by the audience as an escape device. People want to escape the mundanity of their lives and buy a ticket to their dreams; they want to go somewhere else, and don't want to use their dirty linen. Therefore films that are in any way confronting, but particularly when they deal with contemporary political or social issues, are even more difficult.

So, there is a conflict. Perhaps if we had a state-financed film industry, such as in a socialist country, and a socialist distribution industry, *Blueways* might have turned out to be quite a different film, with different elements. Of course we would still like to reinvent the Hollywood ideal, but unfortunately we can't just do it overnight — you can't change audience expectations. And if you attempt to do it too radically, you find that you have no audience, which defeats your whole purpose because you are contradicting to so me, and I guess that is what we are in a constant tension between these elements.

However, there is a lot to be said for the discipline of having to communicate to an audience.

You have said in a previous interview that "carbon copies of American films will not work, and that cinema will only move in taking Australian stories in a style that reflects the national character." In

what ways does "*Blueways*" fulfil these aims?

Seriously it doesn't obey that game, in that it owes as much to *John Ford* as it does to *Film Australia*. But then it does owe something to *Film Australia*, in that the cinema metric or documentary school of filmmaking, from which a lot of the feature film discourses emerged, has had an influence on the sort of formalism that Australian directors have brought to their films.

However, it is not true to say that there is an Australian film style. Rather, there is a style adopted by individual Australian filmmakers, which, because of their experience and preoccupations, hopefully will not just be a carbon copy. It is driven as always whether they are genre elements or whatever, from earlier cinema, or from the cinema of other countries. Hopefully it will be a valid rewriting and extension of these elements.

**What is your really talking about?**



there was the need for originality in general, and not necessarily the establishment of a national style because I think that is impossible.

It is interesting to list the films that the cast and crew studied for months before the film. They were *Chinatown*, *Taxi Driver*, *Mean Streets*, *The Confession*, *Paradise View*, *Big Sleep*, *Portrait of a Lady*, *Blaze Two*, *Double Indemnity*, *The Fountainhead* and a documentary made by Pat Finks in Sydney called *Woodhouse*. You draw inspiration from many sources.

A critical factor of your work is its editing. "*Newsfront*" won a state on editor's film, full of sharp cuts and a sustained rhythm. In "*Blueways*" there is also a certain rhythm as you try to get through the film — re-editing the music, soundtrack, editing and cinematography. How much influence did you, as a director, have on the editing and those other elements?

Once again it is a case of trying to encourage everyone I work with to feel I have given them their wings, so that they can contribute as much as their imagination allows. A director is like a cat on a hot tin roof, in that he is so concerned with the whole performance. And each of the contributors to the night's entertainment has a little segment and comes on and does it with as much finesse and originality as can be mustered. I guess that is what a director is like. So, someone has to be the arbiter of when to say yes and no.

I worked quite closely with John Scott, the editor. Each one of us becomes, in a sense, an extension of the other, often John would be the starting point for my comments, negative or positive, and that would be the background for another approach to the scene.

There is a great community art. It is one big collaboration, and none successful when hermeneutic. Any film is not really the director's film, but it is, or should be, the result of

many people's work. The director provides the common element, the overall direction and is the shape of the atmosphere conducive to creative collaboration.

You have often used Vince Minnan as your cameraman. Is this a collaboration that will continue?

Yes as much as possible. It is really quite hard doing a film because you can be working with more than 100 people. The relationship you can have with any one person is severely limited by your time and energy, you have to split yourself up into so many areas of collaboration. So you tend to have a fragmented relationship with people. This is especially the case when you are working with actors.





David Noyes

The actor-director relationship is based on trust. It is unlike on the stage where the actor has the feedback of a living paper to guide him in the effectiveness of his communication and performance. On a film set, the actor has himself — and the director, who for better or worse is the person that the actor primarily looks to for guidance and assistance. And for an actor to really give all, to go out as a limb, to try the impossible, you need to have quite a close relationship.

In general, when I find people with whom I have a profitable relationship, I like working with them as much as possible — because the creative relationship develops over time. You can get to the stage when you can communicate in shorthand, and with cinematographers, editors and composers you start to know what hidden tricks they haven't yet pulled out, and you can encourage them to draw them out. Of course, this could change on different types of projects where you want a fresh input, a different perspective. But generally you keep some collaboration going. Why should Peter Ward change Russell Boyd or Bruce Beresford change Don McAlpine as their cinematographers when together they have done their best work?

There are some similarities between "Heatwave" and "Peter Ward's Last Wave". In both films

there is a concentration on creating atmosphere, and using the elements, such as water, as a recurring physical theme . . .

I wasn't consciously aware of it, but I must have been aware because there are some similarities, as you have pointed out. One is attracted by all the films on his axis, especially by Australian films in my class, because they have more direct relevance to my work. If one wants to create an environment, one of the main methods in music I guess is a major similarity of both films is the electronic scores. But it was never conscious.

How did you arrive at the futuristic Eden design?

We invited a couple of architects to submit designs and, quite by accident, the one to which we responded best was designed by a rival whose experience paralleled that of the film architect, Steve West. The designer, Paul Phelan, became the star guy for Steve West. He walked into our office, as Steve West may well have done, with a series of crazy drawings and a futuristic design for a building, and within a short time he had convinced us that that was the way to go. So we gave him the blank cheque to build his dream by 4-metre model, and he set to work with a team of model builders in

1968, then every month to build. Of course, the building could be built in a perfect.

Phelan remained on the set to give advice on architectural matters. The character of West was also helped along by advice from other architects, and by Richard Moor's interpretation.

The overall feeling to the film, and this may fit in with your view of Sydney, is that ultimately everyone is locked into a game. No one really knows the solution — you can't pinpoint the real reason for the game — and one can't come to grips with what is going on, even though there are some short-term resolutions. Do you see Sydney as some sort of interlocking set of power relationships?

To a degree. Of course, there is some sort of coalition in the end: the strip-tease owner is shot dead. But the story, in more ways than not, is open-ended.

Do you see any major responsibility on behalf of the Housing Commission and state authorities that have been involved in so many housing conflicts and scandals in recent inner-city politics?

I couldn't have brought in any more elements. We tried to deal with as many as it is, although we do refer briefly to the Housing

Commission. David shows a brief interview with

Commission. Mary Ford says at the students' meeting that if they can stall this a little longer Housing will go back, and the Government will take over, which is a reference to public housing, the only real solution to the problem of Eden being built. Eden are going to continue to be built, and thus more lower-income earners, people who are disadvantaged for whatever reason will continue to suffer without some form of intervention.

Violence is one form of intervention, which has been mainly practised, at least in the Sydney experience, by people who have wanted to build the buildings rather than those who have opposed them. But I think public housing is a more practical solution. We canvassed this only briefly.

Do you see a certain progression in your work, through the early documentaries to "Backroads", "Newfront" and "Heatwave"?

I don't see it, but inevitably there must be, because things happen by chance and they give rise to other events. But I just notice them. I leave it to others to draw connections. ■



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*Alone: Warsaw, Poland, 1945: **JOSEPH COOPER**, the deconstruction of war. Left: **John Zehn's Requiem**, the last life of a forgotten Holocaust victim (Edie Paul) during the 1940s. Below: **Big Swimming in Chicago, 1942**. **Thomas J. Kasper** is August 14, 1945 in the Bronx, New York. **Joseph Cooper** is August 14, 1945 in the Bronx, New York.*

















# FAR EAST

*A romantic drama set against a panoramic South East Asia background. It is the story of Morgan Koebe (Bryan Brown), proprietor of the Koala Club, who meets again Jo Reeves (Helen Morse), a former lover and wife of the ambitious Australian journalist Peter Reeves (John Bell).*

*Far East* is written and directed by John Daiconi, for producer Richard Alston. It stars Bryan Brown, Helen Morse, John Bell, Simon Lewis, Kiana McKinn, Henry Foxe, Bill Hunter and John Guden.

*Clockwise from right: Daiconi directs Morgan Koebe (Bryan Brown) and Jo Reeves (Helen Morse) meet again; Peter Reeves (John Bell), a successful, ambitious, Australian journalist in South East Asia, and his wife Jo; Peter puts his bid to the test in fully political events through Lieutenant (Kiana McKinn); Peter, Joanne and Morgan; Morgan in his Koala Club, part public club, part meeting hole for Australians in South East Asia; Morgan and Jo.*













JOAN FONTAINE

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MR. "Wasn't Joan Fontaine wonderful... and she looked so lovely?"

BO: "She always demanded so do you?"

# Joan Fontaine

Joan Fontaine's career as a Hollywood star of the so-called "golden age" follows an almost archetypal pattern: brief apprenticeship in the 1930s; instant, secure stardom after a major popular success (in "Rebecca"); a range of rewarding roles with some notable directors in the ensuing decade; and a gradual tailing off in the 1950s and '60s as the old Hollywood declined. Unlike some major stars, she did not have or seek a career as a character actress but chose to pursue a highly successful stage career — among a variety of other accomplishments. As a film star, she gave several of the most sensitive performances of the 1940s. Today, at 63, she is articulate and outspoken about the Hollywood system. She talks with Brian McFarlane.

In the pre-"Rebecca" days, it seemed to me there were three high spots: "A Damsel in Distress" with Fred Astaire, "Songs Ben" with Cary Grant, both directed by George Stevens, and "The Women", directed by George Cukor. How valuable did you find it, at that very early stage in your career, working with such directors as Cukor and Stevens?

I learned nothing from George Stevens, except I was really in love with him, as everybody was — Elizabeth Taylor, Shirley Williams. We all fell madly in love with this one fourth American Indian.

He was irresistible, but he was God, and I suppose God is pretty irresistible.

George Cukor had been a stage director and taught me much, much more than almost all the directors I have ever worked with. He was wonderfully warm and a person who was cordial for you and not in any way what we call from-office. He didn't give a damn about billing or contracts or anything, but cared about you as a performer. He would bring out things in you that

you didn't even know you had. He gave you such confidence.

So his reputation, of being a great actors' director and very sympathetic with women, is really deserved...

"Women's director"! He was removed, if you will remember, from *Love With the Proper Woman* Clark Gable and Leslie Howard went in *David* (Selznick) and said, "We can't work with him; he's prepping the ladies all the time and bothering about their caprices, we are not going anything."

The ladies then went for Sunday afternoon sessions with him, I understand...

True. But you can understand why Clark Gable and Leslie Howard wouldn't understand him, or be there.

I particularly liked your performance as Peggy in "The Women". How did you feel about playing that part among so many more flamboyant roles, with people like Ronald Reagan, Mary Boland, Irene Crawford and Pauline Goddard?

I hadn't come out of the egg yet. I didn't know what I was all about.



It was devastating, apart from anything else — to be with all these great people — not that I really knew they were great. How could I? I had been in London in Japan and never saw films or heard much about them.

I was not impressed by Hollywood because in Japan you have lovely houses and screens and all these and parties were much nicer in Tokyo than Hollywood. So I didn't really know who these people were and I understood that it was a very important industry. It seemed to me something lovely to do, which gave me moderate independence, and the ability to express myself in some way. But I had no idea it was an international business because it wasn't in Tokyo where Kubota was much more important than a local cinema.

You were really being thrown in at the deep end, in a way, with "The Women".

"My God, he looks like a monkey!" Do you remember that? "Do something to his eyebrows." Mr Goldwyn didn't think Laurence Olivier was anything particular.

Do you think playing that role in "The Women" was influenced in David Selznick's decision to cast you in "Rebecca"?

I know that it was George Cukor who said: "I have a young girl, take a look at her." But I had not heard anything. He was looking for a bright, young, terribly naive English girl, which is exactly what I was. It was a case of absolutely the right place, right time, with the right sort of look and equipment, and everything else.

It must have been very striking because you were chosen in preference to, say, Margaret Sullivan, who was, at that time, a more established star.



Below: Joan Fontaine (second left) with Norma Shearer, Richard Widmark, Pauline Goddard and Mary Boland in George Cukor's *The Women*. Below: Joan Fontaine, Laurence Olivier, Gil (in Cukor) and Reginald Denny in Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca*.



I had known them socially, we were part of that British colony in Hollywood and, my God, they all seemed older than the world. You know, when you are 20 and somebody is 35 they have had it as far as you are concerned. They shouldn't have been taking up room on the earth. I was surprised they could walk!

But was it so agreeable atmosphere?

No, because Hitchcock and Selznick made it very clear to me that Olivier wanted Vivien Leigh in the role and that they were taking me on some sort of tolerance. I understood that in her book Gladys Cooper refers to "the little American actress", well, I was English. So there was that kind of consideration before we had even met, because they wanted Vivien.

Vivien was in the club but I was not in that special club. That's a very interesting aspect of the English — they are cliquey. So are the Germans and the Japanese. They made it very clear that I, at 21, was an outsider, an interloper, who had stolen the role from Vivien.

Well, whatever happens next at work, it gave you that marvelous impression of being overworked, vulnerable, shy ...

and self-effacing and apologetic. All these things they actually did to me over and above the demands of the characters they were playing.

What about playing the role of Mrs De Winter when you must have known it was an extremely popular novel and everyone had ideas about this "lovely and unusual person with the lovely and unusual name"?

You are taking a lot for granted there because it was just another



You, but I really never knew about it. It didn't hit me far earlier when I did not know I really didn't know who Laurence Olivier was. He wasn't anybody at that stage was he?

On the stage, his reputation was something, and he had made "Wuthering Heights" by that time, which I suppose had made him a mature star ...

He was not deemed by Goldwyn as being anything special, he was

but she was not English and she was much older.

You knew that legendary remark of Hitchcock's about actors needing to be treated like cattle. What do you think about his methods of handling actors? Did you find him helpful?

Absolutely, though he was inclined to tear people down in front of others. As I say in my book *No Bad of Water*, he divided and conquered, he had that habit of

saying "this silly old actor over there" or "that idiot" or whatever it was and probably did the same about me. But it was a very clever device. On both films I did for him we all ended up hardly and because of these tactics.

You were very young and acting with his distinguished cast of British actors: Olivier, Gladys Cooper, Nigel Bruce, George Sanders and so on. Did you feel estranged by this?





Joan Fontaine as Ivy in *San Quentin*, a film of the same name: "the best of women who goes undercover a good time"

book that was on. It wasn't at that time anything better or worse than *Frenchman's Creek* or whatever else Dianna did. It was simply one of the many romantic novels of that period, and remember they were coming out pretty fast. *Forever Amber* was to come soon, and so on. No, it wasn't a particularly exciting moment for that studio. All the other studios were grinding out other things.

It wasn't for instance, at the order of playing Scarlett O'Hara, where everyone had an image of the heroine?

David made them as important as possible because he was a very good shrewdness. But other than that, he didn't think it was particularly special.

You got your Oscar the next year for "Suspicion", again with Hitchcock. Did you think you were partly because of your performance in "Rebecca"?

Yes, I think so. It's after the case, isn't it? Elizabeth Taylor and during Ginger Rogers got it. You know there was a lot of sympathy in Groucho's vote. She had appeared twice. Fred Astaire and everyone was rooting for her because she had made a success as an actress. It was done with affection. We were rather amazed that Astaire's wife had said Ginger really wasn't quite the social manner she wanted for Fred. That instantly changed the vote.

In the post-"Rebecca" period, were you in a strong position to choose your roles?

Not at all. I was under contract to David and that meant I had no opinion or choice whatsoever. As a matter of fact, as I look back, I am appalled he didn't give me some of his other roles that were likely to be bad. David's horror head me for very little was making out for the most money he could, so he turned down all the other offers and kept me in a vault, as it were, until he got the price he didn't help my career. I only made one film for him.

Yes, because you then went on to make quite different sorts of films. Up until "Frenchman's Creek", you seemed to be developing this on-screen image of a shy, unworldly, touchingly-restrained young woman...

I hated Frenchman's Creek and I went on suspension for months, but David had sold me to the studio for such an enormous amount that he wasn't going to let me work in anything else. And he was enough of a psychologist to know that, if actors aren't working, finally they burst at the seams. So, one day I called him up and said, "All right, I'll do the picture" but he didn't give me a scene. He didn't do anything.

So I just hired some in the picture that I was directed and I was refusing roles that were offered to me. I had nothing to do with it.

He used the press, which was a common thing in Hollywood to beat down the actor/writer/publisher/director, whatever it is, but that was part of the studio system, and he didn't care if I had made an other film. He wanted that amount of money, and he got it from Paramount. I think he got \$350,000, or something like that, for me and he

was paying me \$500 a week, if that, as his profit was enormous and he was going to wait for that.

David didn't care about the consistency of my career because he had also signed Dorothy Marston, Jennifer Jones, Ingrid Bergman, Joseph Cotten and the young actor married to Jennifer at the time (Robert Walker) — I think we he was under contract. He had this stable of actors and he was playing chess with us. He wasn't doing any more than that.

And yet, as producers go, he does seem to be one of the few who left some kind of imprint of quality on his films.

New look, how many films did he make?

Not enough. He spent a lot of time on films and wrote a lot of movies about them.

That's right, but *Game With the Wind*, *Rebecca*, *Dead in the Sun* — what else?

The 1930s "Forever to Arms", with Jennifer Jones and Rock Hudson...

Oh yes, but I am talking about this period. Oh, he later became Jennifer's manager and put her in films like *Love is a Many Splendored Thing* and *Tender is the Night*. But I mean at this time. It was Jennifer who got him back to working — for her.

In this period he was such a success, and a social success as well. He had all that Long Island-Virginia push behind him, and I think he entirely relied on his laurels. He became a petty politician, and he was determined

to have his way with us and tell us what we would do.

Was he responsible for putting you into films like "This Above All", "The Constant Nymph" and "Jane Eyre"?

No, he didn't put me into *Constant Nymph*. I did that on my own. I met Eddie Goulding one day and he said that he was looking for some girls. This character, *Franklin*, 14-year-old girl who had also to be a star, because that was what Warner Bros wanted. I said, "Well, how about me?" and he said "Yes?" Well, I had just won an Academy Award, but I was in picture without making up and he said, "You're perfect!" That's how I got that.

Goulding always sounded like a man of real culture.

I loved him, and he backed the Hollywood system. He was one of the great insiders — and there are many of course in Hollywood — where he told everybody off and because of that kind of reputation, that he happened in Hollywood, he was hated from working anywhere. He had a very wonderful man. It was a terrible system in many ways, good to others.

I'd like to take up your remarks about the studios because I am interested in your relation to them. Unlike some actresses, like Bette Davis or Warner Bros, Claudette Colbert or Paramount and Rita Hayworth at Columbia, you never

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Joan Fontaine and Jane Fonda in *Max O'Relly*, *Letter from an Unknown Woman* one of the high points of her life.





# FILM INSURANCE

Film insurance is a subject usually taken for granted; rarely does it invite controversy or debate. But its importance cannot be ignored.

The Adair Insurance Broking Group was the first local broker to specialize in local films; Cinesure is the most recent. While only two of several important and experienced companies, they provide a good base for this first look at the state of film insurance in Australia and the issues facing film producers and investors.

In future editions, the range of topics covered will expand to include completion guarantees, and representatives of other local and overseas broking firms will be interviewed.

## ADAIR



The Adair Insurance Broking Group was established in 1961, when Australian insurance broking companies were only beginning to consolidate their position.

In 1972, Adair entered the Australian film industry as the first local broker to specialize in insuring local films, at a time when the film specialists were noticeably absent from the local scene.

In the past decade, Adair has insured dozens of Australian films. Beginning with *Wake In Fright* in 1972, the company has watched the insured value of Australian films jump from around \$200,000 to in excess of \$7 million per production. In the past few months alone, the company has insured more than \$35 million worth of Australian film product. The stakes are high.

As the first Australian brokers to specialize in Australian film, Adair has recently expanded its base considerably through its appointment as sole representative in Australia and New Zealand for Albert G. Ruben and Co. of Los Angeles and The Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. The Fireman's Fund, founded in 1863, is the largest entertainment underwriter in the world today. More than 70 per cent of all insured films are covered by Ruben and The Fireman's Fund.

Mike Channel talks to Ronald S. Adair, founder and chairman of Adair Insurance Broking Group.

*Ronald S. Adair, founder and chairman of Adair Insurance Broking Group*



# FILM INSURANCE

Up to the time of entry by the *Admiral Insurance* Group into the Australian film business, what had been your personal interest in the development of the local industry?

I have been involved with the Sydney Film Festival for more than 20 years and been on the committee. There was a personal interest in Australian film, and the opportunity to become involved in the insurance side of the business was welcome indeed.

At the time, of course, film insurance didn't mean much in terms of premium income — and would not do so for some time. However, I decided to make the film business my specialty at a time when our company structure — and the film industry generally — was growing considerably. I personally handled all film matters for several years and remain directly involved today, although the division took his assigned assignments.

At that stage, how confident were you that ultimately there would be a reasonable premium income from the business, and that Australian film product would become a viable international commercial proposition?

There was no confidence in particular, and no real lack of confidence. At the time, it was something new for me, and at that time we were making many new areas of development in the insurance business. After all, our business as brokers was to develop any areas of insurance which were being neglected by other brokers — and few were interested in Australian film then. Naturally enough we were also interested in our own growth.

Our philosophy was, and remains that whatever a client's needs — particularly if they are specialized needs — it is worth our driving into the business to leave what it is all about. Hopefully observing a pace of that market through the growth of our own expertise. Belief in the product was, and is, paramount to that company's success.

Were there many other Australian brokers specializing in the business at the time?

No, except for one or two semi-independent brokers. Certainly, there were no specialist film insurance brokers in Australia. General brokers such as Salpwick Collins and Higgs Robinson were doing some business here, but the sphere was very limited.

the need for comprehensive insurance coverage in the early 1970s?

As the needs arose, I think the industry was looking out for itself as much as anything else, what it was all about. Australian writers were not conscious of the types of insurance packages which were available for their protection — at first.

Remember, in the early 1970s, it was all such a new market for Australia. As our film producers became involved with overseas interests — just as Lloyd's Marine, then managing director of NLT Productions, had linked with US connections — the international parties were requiring full insurance protection as part of the arrangement.

At *Admiral* began to grow in the industry, began to understand these insurance and develop the market accordingly, we encouraged producers to approach a local broker such as ourselves for advice, then taking advantage of our local knowledge of the area. By the way, we could ward proposals, providing information for the underwriter that would not normally be given by an overseas broker, we were able to obtain competitive rates. And that was a recognizable benefit.

In today's terms, was such early insurance coverage relatively "superfluous"?

It was not quite as sophisticated as today's insurance, but basically it was similar. Film Producer's Indemnity, Negative All Risk — the blueprint was available from the working model overseas.

How did you develop the capacity to provide these competitive insurance rates?

There were no specialist brokers around until I began developing our facilities through the Lloyd's brokers in London. I was surprised to discover, upon my first immersion of the London market, that a number of the old, established English insurance companies carried specialist film divisions.

All international film business, however, had to go through London. Affiliates in Australia and elsewhere could not establish their own rates, or even quote on the business. The specialist offices in London kept direct control of the market, their own people outside London couldn't touch the business.

However, we found that once we established connections with the Lloyd's brokers to effect the secu-

very introduction to the London market, we could reap the benefits of their accumulated claims experience and specialist facilities for our own marketplace. And that was the way we went.

I also visited the U.S. on that first exploratory trip and intended to do so each year. I kept all about Albert G. Robins and Co. in Los Angeles and their underwriter, The Freeman's Fund Insurance Company, which is the largest entertainment and film underwriter in the world. It would be many years, however, before they moved into the Australian market.

Apart from offering rates for production, is there a percentage formula relating to the overall cost of a production which dictates the allocation for insurance expenditure?

Yes. A rule of thumb is two per cent as a ceiling on film insurance. This includes all insurance to be placed, including World's Compensation and Public Liability, alongside the total production coverage.

At what stage are you generally called in to consult on insurance?

*Continued on p. 284*



*The Harder They Fall in Fight, the first Australian film handled by *Admiral Insurance**

What was the level of awareness of



# FILM INSURANCE CINESURE



Cinesure, a new Australian underwriting agency, was launched in April to act for the first Australian insurance market to provide the full range of insurance coverage for the film and television industries. Cinesure is a division of Terence Lipman Pty Ltd, a Sydney-based insurance consultant.

The companies involved in the new market are the Commercial Union Insurance Co. of Australia, QBE Insurance Ltd, AMP Fire and General Insurance Co. Ltd, and the Insurance Co. of North America (Australia) Ltd.

The following interview, with Terry Lipman, chairman of Terence Lipman Pty Ltd, and Neil McEwin, head of Cinesure, was conducted by David White.

**Specialist insurance has been available to Australian film and television producers for some years. So what is the difference between Cinesure and those that currently operate in the film and television insurance field in Australia?**

**Lipman:** There are two major differences. First, Cinesure is an underwriting agency, which means we negotiate and write our own insurance policies. In contrast, those already operating in this field in Australia are not underwriters but insurance brokers, which means they act as intermediaries between clients and the insurers.

The second major difference is that Cinesure is an Australian agency which acts for four of Australia's most substantial insurance companies, all of which are licensed under the Commonwealth Insurance Act. This is the first time there has been an Australian insurance market to cover the full range of specialist needs in the film and television industries. The contrast here is that until now, Australian-based brokers have had to place almost all of this kind of insurance with overseas companies, which are generally not licensed under the Commonwealth Insurance Act. The Insurance Act exists to regulate the Australian insurance industry in the interests of the Australian public. So, until the establishment of Cinesure, most film and television insurance coverage for Australian producers has been outside the scope of this Act.

**What advantages, if any, are there in dealing with an underwriting agency directly rather than dealing with a broker?**

**Lipman:** There are not necessarily any financial advantages, because the costs from an underwriting agency would be similar if negotiated directly by the client or indirectly through a broker. But, in practice, the client would probably have better communication and more flexibility in dealing directly because there would not be an intermediary involved and this would leave less room for errors and misunderstandings. I would also make the point that there are very few brokers in Australia who are proficient in the handling of film and television business. Therefore, there would be distinct disadvantages in dealing with an inexperienced insurance broker.

**McEwin:** Looking at the experienced brokers, Terry has made the point that they have had to place virtually all specialist film and television insurance with overseas companies, simply because, until we came along, there was no Australian insurance market in this area. Now a broker's job is to shop around to ensure he gets the best arrangements and deals for his client. So, from this point on, any overseas broker would have to check with us and not automatically place his client's business with a foreign company. In fact, already we have been delighted by the interested responses by brokers.

Top: Terry Lipman, chairman of Terence Lipman Pty Ltd, and Neil McEwin, head of Cinesure. Above: Alan Clark in *Platoon*. Middle: The director of Cinesure, David White, with his brother, David White, in *Platoon*.



# FILM INSURANCE

At present the leading insurance brokers deal with some of the world's biggest insurance companies. Can Closure match the security that comes from using such huge companies with most assets?

Lipman: Absolutely. The combined assets of the four licensed Australian companies for which we are acting are astronomical. The companies are the Commercial Union Assurance Co. of Australia QBE Insurance, AMP Fire and General Insurance Co., and the Insurance Company of North America (Australia). As everybody knows the AMP is a household name in Australia. However it is not just a big Australian company, it is a big international company. The Commercial Union is one of the largest insurers in the world. QBE Insurance is one of the major Australian companies, represented all over the world. And the Insurance Company of North America (Australia) is a subsidiary of probably the largest single insurance company in America.

How many of the four companies for which Closure is acting are overseas-owned?

Lipman: Out of the four, only one is overseas-owned. That's the Insurance Company of North America (Australia). The other three are all Australian companies, substantially or entirely owned by Australians. The AMP is by far the largest life insurance society owned by Australians. The Commercial Union, which is listed on the stock exchange in Australia, has a substantial ownership by the National Mutual, which is the second largest Australian mutual life insurer. The QBE, as one of the biggest general insurers, is also listed on the stock exchange here.

Doesn't a degree of overseas ownership of these companies somewhat diminish your claim to being Australian insured?

Lipman: Not at all. Closure is a wholly Australian-owned agency. And the important thing about the companies for which it acts is that they are all licensed to operate in Australia by the Federal Insurance Commissioner, who is there to regulate all local insurance companies on behalf of the Australian public. They are, by the Commissioner's existing test, Australian licensed insurers.

McEwen: They are also all Australian-based and they give us a closer support than we would have if we were dealing with somebody sitting 15,000 or 20,000 km away.

Lipman: I think that's the point. If a flicks has a claim and he needs a quick settlement of a loss, which it after all what we are talking about, he would go to the office of all of these companies or the closure. They are right here. He could thumb up the counter and say, "I want my money." Now that he'd need it, of course, as Closure would be paying his settlement as quickly as possible. On the other hand he would not have that sort of access with an insurer on the other side of the world.

Closure has only just been established. So how can it match the experience of firms already operating in this field?

McEwen: Closure certainly has only just been established but, as with any company, the experience comes from the individuals operating within the company. All people in Closure have had long experience within the film industry and have experience as only in underwriting but in understanding the needs of production companies.

Lipman: Neil is being modest. There wouldn't be anybody in Australia who is more expert and confident in handling film business than he is. Some of the films with which he has been associated before he joined Closure are *Hearse*, *My Brilliant Career*, *The Prime Mince*, *Mad Max*, *Mad Max 2*, *The Year of Living Dangerously*, *Witness* or *Dr. Strangelove*, *For East*, *Palestine Blues*, *Strawhead*, *The Runaway*, *Captain Jack*, *Now and Forever*, *Fighting Back* and so on.

We would be the first to acknowledge that the major overseas groups who have been providing film and television cover until now are experienced and reliable insurers. But to believe our people have just so much sophistication and knowledge in this area. I think this country has developed to a point where we can offer services of this kind equal to anything in the world. If you want to insure your car, you don't go to an insurance company in Los Angeles. Now there's no necessity to take film and television insurance overseas.

You say in your literature that dealing through a broker with overseas insurers can mean delays in receiving documentation, settlement of claims and the like. Has this really been a significant problem for film and television producers in Australia?

Lipman: I believe it has and this is one of the reasons we established Closure in the first place. There had been in some cases substantial delays in getting documentation, which was embarrassing to people who were waiting for contract money from overseas. Claims payments had often been held up for two or three months, which brought a question about where film were put at jeopardy.

McEwen: And there are natural delays. Brokers here have had to act overseas brokers who then have to place their business in overseas markets. What you make a claim here, you go to your broker who has to go to an overseas broker who

has to get the money out of the insurance market and it then comes back via the overseas broker to your broker here. Add cost and paperwork delays and all of that takes time.

Lipman: We are not accusing anyone of inefficiency or negligence in any way. But there are natural delays because of the insurers being so far away. One problem, for example, can be currency exchange delays.

Your literature has mentioned "competitive rates" and "annual" prices. Will Closure actually cost less for film and television insurance?

McEwen: Not necessarily so. Being an Australian underwriting agency means that at Closure we know the producers. We know their experience and what their capabilities are and certainly we'll be looking at rewarding people who have a very good track record. Not everyone is going to get a discount. We are not here to give cheap rates. We are here to use our experience and expertise to make sure our clients receive the right protection at a fair price, which is the most important thing. A policyholder's business is a sound policy when claims are made.

Lipman: With insurance, the price is obviously a very pertinent consideration but it is certainly not the most essential consideration. I mean, when one buys insurance, one is buying protection. If you are

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*Open Arms* and *After the Rain* in *John Dalgarno's For East*, also handled by McEwen



# The Australian Alternative

Until now, Australian film and TV producers have had to place almost all their specialist insurance coverage with remote foreign insurers.

That's where the business has generally ended up, even when they've dealt with Australian-based brokers.

That can mean delays, withholding taxes pushing up costs, as well as insuring with foreign companies which are often not authorised under the Commonwealth Insurance Act.

## Now there is an Australian alternative

CINESURE is an Australian underwriting agency, backed by four of Australia's most substantial licensed insurers. CINESURE provides complete coverage for film and TV productions—as extensive as that offered by any insurer in the world.

It can protect everything from major feature films to documentaries and commercials.

Because it is based right here in Australia, producers can expect speedier and more personal and flexible service.

Its rates are competitive and it rewards deserving clients.

Next time you want film and TV insurance, call us at CINESURE yourselves or get your broker to call.

## **cinesure**

**The Australian Film & Television Insurance Specialists**

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# Tony Williams talks about NEXT OF KIN

■ Interview by Scott Murray ■

*Next of Kin* was originally going to be a horror film in the genre of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*—quick turnaround and quickly financed. Michael Hough (screenwriter), Tim White (co-producer) and myself had been influenced by what Tobe Hooper did with *Texas Chainsaw* and enjoyed the genre. But when John Carpenter started to make his films, and there was the deluge of Carpenter imitators, the whole thing got very interesting. By the time Friday the 13th had set the

formula for the genre, we had turned completely off that style of film. We were faced with the decision of whether to drop the film completely or go off on another tangent.

It was about that time we were making contact with the U.S. and every time we submitted another draft to contacts over there, we would get replies requesting more violence, more shock, more horror. Finally, an American genre writer said to us, "Look, why don't you do

what you want to do and make a European-style film. Forget about the U.S. market, because if you are going to make an American horror film, you would be better off to go to the U.S. and use American actors."

Was your first version a violent fly or a stand-up?

The original treatment was tongue-in-cheek, just like *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. But something

happens when converting a black comedy idea to paper to the screen. People read or hear, and the thought of having to ride a *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, which is virtually what people were saying we must do, was too much. I just wanted out.

When you say more European than America, how would you define that in terms of genre?

The sort of film I used to enjoy



In the suspense genre were *Les Disparitions*, *Blood and Ruin* and *The Innocents* — in other words, a more subtle, mysterious film, with little explicit violence and more teasing suspense.

Our film has gone through three phases. When we started off as "Sticky End", with money from the New Zealand Film Commission, it was about a cutting company of madmen that went around the country poisoning people's livestock, windmills and such. It was quite funny and violent. Then, it became slightly more respectable as "Before the Night Is Out", but still definitely Carpenter territory.

By that time, we had approached the New South Wales Film Corporation for funds and their American advisors were trying to force us to become quite violent. Finally, we ended up with *Filmsco*, making *Next of Kin*. Even then, we have been under a lot of pressure to keep the action going, to get more violence into it.

Basically, what I wanted the film to be was a trip, a voyage, where you get back and get sucked into the mystery, the suspense.

**When you decided to change directions, did you change supervisors?**

No, we struggled through ourselves. Maybe my only regret would be that we didn't completely bury "Sticky Ends", rather than try to retain elements of it.

**What aspects of "Sticky Ends" remain in "Next of Kin"?**

I suppose the final revealing of Rita (Bernadette Gibson). I think it is going to work all right, but I would have liked, at that point, to have taken off all guns, either totally supernatural or totally schizophrenic. Until the moment, we avoided all the clichés of the shoulder coming into frame, or the hand with the knife quivering in the shadows. The aim was to create a claustrophobic atmosphere, in which you didn't really know if things were real or whether the whole thing was imagined by the girl. Then, all hell breaks loose.

It is a very strange kind of film to make because it is not until you get all the elements together, until the effects trick and the music tracks have been laid, that you really know if the film works 100 per cent. When I saw *Halloween* the first time, I was on the edge of the seat and had goose-pimples up and down my spine. When I saw the film again at home as *Thelma*, I thought it was appalling. Suddenly, I could see all the tricks and the games, and it had no interest for me beyond that.

In a way, there is a similar process with *Next of Kin*. We are dealing with people's fears and flight. And since you have made the film, you really don't know

what is working until you see it in a darkened theatre with an audience. Even now, I am quite amazed if someone happens to suddenly jump out of his seat at a point where I had forgotten there was supposed to be a fight.

Some directors, like George Miller, have said that they view this type of film as a kind of esthetic experience. You take the audience down to death, they don't die, and they feel relieved afterwards. Do you see it in those terms?

I really don't want to be involved in making genre films, though the attraction of doing one was the manipulative force of the suspense film. It is fun to wave the wand and manipulate the audience, to see whether you can have them falling off their seats.

This type of genre film can be either terribly easy to make — if you just stick with the formula laid down by Friday the 13th, with a violent murder every seven minutes — or an extraordinarily difficult film, if you choose to ignore the formula, the clichés. This is the

I don't think you can start it until all the elements are together, and by then it is often too late. If I ever do a another type of film, some, which I doubt, I would build into the budget a period of sitting after the film is made, with enough flexibility to go back and over-kill some areas. When we did test-screen the film to ourselves, people didn't really get involved because there wasn't any music and it didn't have the right effects.

What we did find was that it was very early-induced. If we put one shot in front of another, a scene would come to life. If we covered the order, the scene would go flat. It is very hard to gauge what makes the genre-jumpkin rise.

Perhaps this is the sort of film that is largely made in the editing. You can arrange all the pieces and it creates the right effect, whereas with a straight dramatic film you can't change the liberality that much.

That is true, we spent hours on the editing, and it was interesting

per se, as if it is their right because the film is "genre". You feel you are under quite a lot of pressure, not from individuals necessarily, but from groups of people of whom it is so difficult to disagree. I am sure now that it is better to leave the liberality alone and encourage personal taste against committee voice.

**By "group" do you mean Filmsco?**

Filmsco or anyone. We were often in simple adversities. At one stage we had people who had worked at Crawford's looking at it. They wanted to go towards the logical all the time, and the producers were pushing for more traditional genre elements. But I don't think such men want this type of film to be logical. They want to escape, to take an amazing voyage. That is why I realised there was potential to go off into other, bizarre dimensions. By the end of the film, where Linda (Julie Karu) is sitting in a cave, having ascended towers of smoke cubes, and there are bathroom showers on



Director Percy Willows behind the lens on location for *Next of Kin*. It is his second feature, and follows *Kids*.

hardest film I have been involved with, because you are dealing with something that is supposed to be a mystery, supposed to be suspenseful, but without a strong plot or strong dialogue. You really have to use all the resources of the filmmaking technique to move the audience.

To help determine that audience reaction, are you audience-testing the film?

Because Miss Lenton, who got this film, also cut *Phantoms* at Hanging Rock and *The Last Wave*. Lenton and he had gone through similar problems with those films — namely, they really didn't know what they had until they got into the cinema theatre, and added the atmosphere, post paper and so on.

A funny thing about genre films is that because they are heavily hated, people who can influence a production all want to include their

reference dancing to Strauss' "Kaiser Waltz", the whole world has gone a bit crazy. So, it was a pity anything needed to be explained at all. Maybe the whole thing could have been in her head.

**How would you rate other Australian attempts at the suspense genre?**

I can't speak with any knowledge, because I don't think I





Peter Phillips lives at the location-mounted camera for a shot of *Charlie Marshall*. Not of his.

have seen any, except *Nightmares*, which I thought was dreadful. I may be speaking out of turn, but I felt that was an example of the easy-to-make horror film. However, if you are going to make a film to fill a gap with a certain kind of audience, then that is probably the way you should go. I don't know if our film is going to be successful commercially because we broke all the rules.

Were you tempted during the shooting to play it safe and show the spider go into Rita's apartment, or have a bit more sex in it?

No. At that time we were about the tent and going in the direction we wanted to go, we weren't prepared to deviate.

One thing your commercials and this film have in common is no element of black comedy, such as in the case of the talking koolha....

I believe it is an important part of the whole process of making films, and I can't escape it. In whatever I do, I always have to see the other side of the coin. Steven Spielberg is excellent in this because if he is doing a big spectacular entertainment film, he is brilliant at dropping in the belly laugh at the moment you are least expecting it. It reduces tension and then you rock up again in the direction you were once travelling.

I don't think there is nearly enough hyperbolic parody in Australian film. Sometimes we take ourselves far too seriously.

## PRODUCERS

You have mentioned the involvement of Filmmé. When did you become involved with a producer?

I was originally involved with Michael Biehn and Tim White when it was just going to be a low-budget horror film and a bit of a laugh. Then it became obvious it

was going to involve special effects and stunts, and it was going to be bigger than something that could be shot in four weeks. Because Tim, at that stage, hadn't produced a feature film, one of the conditions of my being involved was that we had another producer who had experience in the finance and legal side. So Tim agreed to involve Robert Le Tiss. Robert then became executive producer as well, and really looked after that side of things. He was the strength behind keeping the production together.

How do you see the relationship between a producer and a director?

It changes on every film. Basically, there are two types of production: a producer's film whereby the producer has the inspiration, owns the property, controls the director and eventually decides what he wants, and a director's film where the director has the creative control, which is the way I prefer to work. Then a sort of a very good producer, the victim of your producer, but

ultimately the film becomes one person's vision. I would hate to have a film re-edited against my wishes or behind my back.

But whatever approach you adopt, it is essential the director and producer are sure they are making the same film before they start.

It is like a love affair: you meet, get into bed together, then end up in each other's throat. You have to survive the highs, the lows, the disputes, the envious, the back-office and so on. It can certainly put a friendship to the test.

One of the problems working with a finance company, when you don't have your own money, is that you can find yourself getting involved with committee members. The ideal situation is to be able to work with one producer who understands the needs of the creative side of the business and also has a very good grip on the financial and commercial side. The moment you start to involve more and more people, you begin to dissipate the personal touch. I've seen too much of that in television



when I worked at the BBC, and in making commercials, dealing with agencies.

## MUSIC

The music is being written by Klaus Schulze and one of the greatest hazards of the film has been working with him. He saw our film totally in terms of sound, and immediately understood what we were trying to do. He wants to take effects that have been recorded for the film and turn them into music through a computer synthesizer he uses in Germany. It is an experiment, so that we don't know what we will have until the tapes come in the mail.

**Why did you choose Schulze?**

When we were wrestling with the problem of writing the last version of the script, we found that when we tried to analyze the structural problems but came up against dead ends, a Klaus Schulze sound would suddenly dissolve the problems and the way ahead seemed clear. The atmosphere of the music was

what the film was all about. But even at that stage we didn't consider Klaus writing the music. There were quite a few Australian composers we were interested in, but they weren't available.

During the shooting of the film, we used Klaus' music as playback for Jackie Kees as end-vision. Even so, it really wasn't until we went to post-production that we thought of approaching Klaus. We felt he would be too busy, but he jumped at the chance of doing a suspense genre film.

**What other films has Schulze done?**

Apart from his own recordings, he has done a lot of documentary work. He also worked on *The Man Who Fell From Earth* and a film with Rainer Werner Fassbinder. He is about to do the music for Paul Mazursky's *The Tempest* with John Covert.

**What sort of machine does he use?**

Basically it is a digital computer. It is the only kind in the world, because it has been specially built for him. Among the electronic computers, he is considered by many to be the most advanced.



Klaus Schulze keeps notes industriously up the street. Who knows what he looks like at the top? None of his.



Composer Klaus Schulze at his digital computer

**How does he score a film?**

The same way as a normal composer. We went through the film, decided what themes were going to be used and where each theme should begin and end. We then transferred the film to videotape and, at his studio in Berlin, he will project the videotape on to the wall.

In computer mode, nothing is written down. He can recall any sound he wants if it is stored on his floppy discs. Once he has found the device, he can put that into his computer, recording it later and doing variations of it.

So, from the images that we have decided, and from having viewed the film, he will then compose a score on the keyboard which will be recorded on tape. In some cases, he will take a sound effect, and from that make a beat. This is then synthesized. When the effect is repeated over and over again, and it eventually becomes a tone, the tone can be attached into chords. Then, all of a sudden, you can have a Wagnerian chorus — and all you actually started with was the sound of a water-hose splashing in and off.

It has been so fascinating working with Klaus, and it would really like to do another film. Only this time start with his involvement

during pre-production. All too often we have the storyboard until the film is shot. But you can consider the soundtrack from the start. And with computers, it is just amazing just what the possibilities are, because you don't necessarily need an orchestra. All you need is one man and his machine. You can spend years time playing with ideas.

In fact, if we do another film, there is no reason why Klaus can't work with his computer. As long as he can look into a studio somewhere along the line, he can just sit in front of the film and create any effect or sound you want.

## LIGHTING STYLE

The film has a distinctive visual style, particularly in the lighting...

Yes. Well, the other half on the film was working with Gary Houston who shot it. Toby Phillips, who was the Stockholm operator, and Noel MacDonald, who built the second camera rig for the shot. On the visual side of the film, these three people did

Continued on p. 281





# THE JOHN BARRY GROUP..

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Working on one of many tapes for video disc is A&V-Accurate's staffer Andrew Plimford. Is it really so hard?

more video all though we get capable of producing alpha tracks. The reason is the NTSC extension is ATN-T (Synchro down) here for copyright handling dual audio tracks. If stereo is required we would have to send time to the U.S. with stereo down-lead standards to be translated to use here. In that case, we would lose some of the content, which SMPN doesn't want to do.

#### Does A&V protect all the material for the GMI disc?

No, they don't necessarily produce all the individual segments, but all the mastering is done here.

#### Are all the GMI discs for use by the viewer?

Yes, but they are often a mixture of material for showing to technicians and for video selling, or technician workshop training. They try to mix them up too much to reduce the risk of someone stealing something. Here I may remember to be or not be interested in.

For GMI 1982 version you have to mix them up a little bit to make that much use of the space. Almost all the discs are double-sided. I can remember one where the material for the second side was not ready in time and was released single-sided.

Some of the specific functions of the tape would be confusing to the average user, but most of the tape video cassette recorder (VCR) functions operate the same way. I realized there was something a "jump" on the first side.

The reason that the freeze frame is available as a result of the tape video fields that are interlaced to make the image. The machine has to pause video which takes time to change for a stable and still, but it is a true still frame.

One modification all the discs to describe with two fields. The VHS disc I have made four frames in all more and is very different. It has a repeat in the picture. On the later model optical machines in all frames you have still field which stops any at that place.

As for the other tape there is a selectable pause mode that can prevent the tape from moving. If you hit the pause time in conjunction with other keys it will give a different result, but by pressing freeze alone you will get straight to the freeze on the disc.

The latest disc player has the most accurate search time down to one and a half seconds. The player takes about four-and-a-half seconds. The training

psychologist said all that there is a psychological time curve after eight seconds. If the function takes longer than that people lose interest. Nothing on the machine takes as long as that.

When you are in the middle of a video, you see the material at about 30 times the normal speed. If you hit the stop button first, then stop. It gives a sense of about 3 times normal.

#### Does the need for a sub-response time affect your programming?

Formating the disc does not always involve getting the whole idea of the head and end of the disc. The quantization is often put around the material so that it is needed as the disc is not changed. The disc is programmed to stop every three seconds until the material is finished.

As an alternative instead of repeating the section when a wrong answer is given, you can have a routine that says, "You have chosen wrong but you will see it if you go back and watch each section." Or an idea example we have they have actually programmed a 30-second pause for each of the answer given. If you have any questions with any three alternatives, you could have 10 seconds half minute segments.

It is a fairly advanced way to do it, because it goes up that space but it shows you to give everyone a different response (personalized) the level of their understanding at the question.

A&V is setting the standards for the first material, but on some of the material you have shown this, there is some poor quality film strips that are already included because of its interrelation. Without the restrictions of programming in the real broadcast standards, would this open the way to show other programs produced as low-end cassette format, for example?

Our responsibility is GMI for overall quality control, and if you have the capacity on the disc for high quality images then you try and make sure that your data material is good. It is a low-end reproducible line you have to show you have to be better with the degradation than the NTSC standards. It is possible to make and improve point on there is no more you can do on the disc, even though you do go through entire process at the disc.

What we are likely to say to other people is what we said to GMI. If you have other material you have produced that is better quality than the NTSC, we will look at it. It is not an NTSC standard. There were some training discs that were also

gone in Japan that we have used after a bit of playing around while some of them we had to make. So you can often adapt existing audio-video material. You would also have to do all your quality material for example.

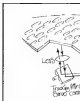
The material that is essential at this stage, according to the needs of the client, then undergoes a standards conversion. You maintained the difficulty that the different frame rate of 20 frames a second versus 30 frames a second (you haven't lost or gained frames).

From the NTSC conversion we produce a VHS-NTSC disc that has all the frames identified. This has all at least three, it even though we don't actually run the program. The video is done every frame through a video to write the program for Pioneer video to interpret at the final microprocessor. Information changed into the final one. We write what should happen at each frame, whether it should stop for 10 seconds or search all for a different section or repeat, and then we have made up that part. It is almost like coding in the details of Pioneer. All a requirement of it is a knowledge of computer programming techniques, which they do the actual electronics.

When Kevin Hoffman went to Detroit and said that he wanted to produce here and end up on NTSC film and he took to verify the result before going into production. The discussion prepared for him and he said it couldn't be done. They said he would have to wait for PAL systems. Kevin is a hard persistent fellow and was determined to get on to it. So they did it with a lot of work for the NTSC system.

I think GMI has been amazed that we have been so successful. GMI has problems dealing with the NTSC system in the U.S. and they are worried about being more accurate with the video problem of a conversion from PAL. I say just don't think it would work.

#### Do you have any information about a PAL video-disc introduction?



#### Laser-optical

Philips developed the system and released it through its U.S. affiliate Magnetics in 1978. It uses a low-powered gas laser that is steered by semi-conducting diodes and focused through the under-surface surface of a reflective metal-coated disc. Small pits on the surface alter the reflection of the laser which is read by a photoconductor and the digital signal is then converted to a television signal. The disc has a protective plastic coating that allows it to be handled, and dust and scratches on the surface do not affect the image. The speed of the disc used for long playing time, can change from the outside to the inside spirals, and the discs used for interactive programming run at a faster speed with concentric spiral reproduction and have a 30-minute capacity. The discs are about three to six billion bits of information, or about 40 times separate minutes. They carry high-quality stereo audio tracks and because there is no tape contact, can hold a longer time indefinitely. Manufacturers who have shown prototypes of products based on Philips include Philips, Pioneer, Sanyo, Sony (some Japanese models), and Hitachi.



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In November last the Film and Television Production Association of Australia and the New South Wales Film Corporation brought together 15 international experts to discuss film financing, marketing, and distribution of Australian films in the 1980s with producers involved in the film and television industry.

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Tape recordings made of the proceedings have been transcribed and edited by Cinema Papers, and published as the Film Expo Seminar Report.

Copies can be ordered for \$25 each.

## Contributors

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Speaker: Barry Spangler, New Mulvaney

##### Perspective II: As Seen by the Seller

The role of the agent in packaging

Speaker: Henry Wiffard

### Theatrical Production

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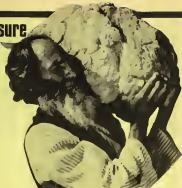
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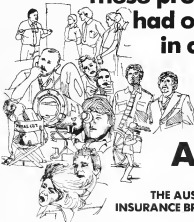






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# Film Reviews



Cherry of the *Chapman Book* *Thompson and Dear* (and *Staying*) *George Miller's The Man from Saturn* *Bliss*

### The Man From Snowy River

Arnold Zable

The *Man From Snowy River* has received the brunt of some many Australian critics. John Hume of the *Kapooka Times* called it a "tragi-comedy worst event" and *Melb* in the *Argo* scathingly referred to it as a "Wahby Western" and went on to denounce the film with the terse sentence: "The horses are good, the scenery is great and that is all that can be said about *The Man From Snowy River*." The film has been ridiculed as crap spew at a local school, and in a crass commercial venture, aimed at marketing an American equivalent to the American cowboy, and is being sold by some warner, since Kirk Douglas. Other critics have preferred to stay clear of it completely.

Yes, *Yankee* can and should be used about this film, not only about its title, but also about its content. For this is the good reason why this movie critics have been asking to subsume *Yankee* about its title is to use people as a means to make a factor of it. This is an important film in terms of the future of American film industry. One needs to ask, for example, why it is possible to create an American movie based on real events and environment with a historical style and theme that is a sign for the dominating American view of the future.

The film's best moments come in the dramatic phase after the wild business. The resolution of the *Beige Pantomime* poem almost makes it all worthwhile. The remarkable skills of the horses are matched by the skills of the film crew. At times man, horse and camera seem to weld together into a flowing stream of stunning action. Even the most hardened heart leaps to the mouth as the hero battles his way across rivers, steep ridges and snow-covered fields.

These wages are only earned by some abroad citizens, which means the

flow at sunset, and there is an eB400-level glimpse of the dining dromedary leap that leaves the Mesa from Scurry River in late pursuit of the wild horizon.

There's a scene after five minutes to do with horses — actually the map, without cut from old Kurosawa, a period and horses throughout — and two of the actors, the well-known Hayakawa Tadamasa as Iwano and Tom Kurosawa as Jim, who the Man from the East. The actors are able to transcend the boundaries of the film. The theme through for quiet passion and stepping in the role of a sworded and strong-willed young woman born and raised in the East of the high country, but Kurosawa is the new mountain man, who gradually evolves into a man of independent strength and resourcefulness, not only guided by the man, but also by his own.

The photographer is at all times alert and it does not take changing a camera some of the most varied of terrain and the atmospheric changes that see the mountains change from green to yellow, orange, red, and blue. The mountains are so close that they seem to be part of the landscape. The mountains are so close that they seem to be part of the landscape. The mountains are so close that they seem to be part of the landscape.

But, despite these virtues, all the inspired ideas of taking a great ballad of American folklore and using it to give a glimpse of the rich tradition at the high-gloss, ostentatious, film goes wrong. The major problems are obvious. The sweeping is filled with clichés and snap-on banalities, except for some welcome moments of local humor, and the direction is mind-numbing and lacking in drive. And one can add the music to this list of woes.

The soundtracks of films such as *Pink & Hungry Rock*, *The Last Wave* and *Homework* have employed music and sound effects in emphatic aspects of the Australian environment.

Most recently, for example, Congress Alfie's experimental drive in Phil Nove's *Hardware* highlighted the need of aggressive reforms and

temor is lost. This was suggested by a subtle soundtrack that allowed the audience to feel the music as an extension of a redemptive journey and access to the space of a homeland. Set in the West Virginian Snowy Mountains, the film offers a chance to hear the mountains speak through music, a word some composers call "musical weather." The music is presented as a "weather system" that links a tubular organ, instead of a symphony orchestra, to the local mountain people, emphasizing the localistic problem and mystery of the high-country world and music that so pollute the atmosphere... the mountains reside behind the melodrama and where the grandeur is all too obvious the world appears

Apparently, a lot of work went into the scripting — a year of plotting, and we done drafts over a period of two years — before Fred Cal Cullem and Mike Owen started their hair-rips. Using those provided in the poem and aiming to structure the film to climax with the rape rate, the plot centers on the lives of two American brothers, the Harringtons (both acted on Eric Dowling).

One brother makes a fortune when the peers get it. Perdue was the Cap. thereby winning the hand of Lord Belle Meade, and becoming a wealthy cattle dealer. The other brother Squibb, who unsuccessfully looked for his fortune as a prospector. After 20 years he is still up in the mountains looking for gold.

John is something of a character, a well-mannered, likable old chap who hobbles around, having had one of his best shots off by the police brother who had responded on a call with his wife Maudie many years earlier. This is the great scene, told from rich Hayslett's daughter Jessica, born to Maudie when she was 16, and John was 22.















process of news gathering and publication, as ubiquitous distortions as uncolored lenses in auto photography that is destined to be false and even the difference of opinion of objectivity because individual if the newspaper can prove that a questionable article was printed without malicious intent.

The tale also deflates a number of relationships contrived by the film. In transmission of professional ethics, private motivations and their potentially destructive consequences underlines a narrative where even the most unfavorable situations are the product of confused allegiances rather than malicious intentions.

Megan Carter (Dolly Parton), a movie reporter employed by *The Miami Standard* believes that the box office dropped a leak from an FBI Strike Force team, led by Elliot Rosen (Bob Odenkirk). She becomes aware that Rosen has actually exposed the leak in order to influence the investigation and turns to target Michael Gallagher (Paul Newman). Megan knows that for the past six months, he has been exclusively involved in an investigation of the disappearance of Joseph Don, leader of the Longhorns' Union in Miami. She knows suddenly that they are viewing a surveillance film shot in the format of Don's movie reel, "The Last" Gallagher. When a malicious interview with Rosen concludes, the screen... falls on Gallagher's son, Michael, on Rosen's desk and assumes that he is a suspect in the Don case after his malicious attacks on the investigation of Michael Gallagher and reveal dismissal of the possible relationship behind the leak, with the support of his editor Michael (John Sarno), provides the narrative trigger for a film that examines and questions some of America's most powerful institutions, from the legal system, the media, the mafia and two of its central icons, the cowboy and the movie star.

In a style that is characteristic of the director and his ability to work level intricately written and around structural games, the overall narrative deals obliquely with the reality of themes that are evident in his previous films: the role of the media in *Body Double*, the importance of loyalty and trust in *Three Days of the Condor*, the mechanistic society in *Jurassic Jurassic* and *The Electric Blueberry*, the dehumanized society, dominated by self-serving political and legal structures.



The ending and the journey: Michael Gallagher (Paul Newman) and Megan Carter (Dolly Parton) believe a source of Malice.

done in *The Way We Were* and *Three Days of the Condor*, and the narrative yet straightforward line story, occurring in a host of disparate environments that avoid any repetition or with cliché.

In Pollock's film, alternatives are only brought to light: powerful, oppressive institutions including the media in *The Property in Condominium* are not automatically caught in relationships where one person questions a clear perspective on himself and his society while the other contends with the loss of pleasure that lead to old-fashioned. The skill and ability with which Pollock handles his characters in contrast within the same story allows these dimensions to establish their selves and then to overlap, resulting in the type of realism that are so loyal to the audience, or *Kubrick*, yet slowly defining a narrative of the divine and

confusion that has played out of the original characters through the film. Gallagher is drawn into a narrative perceptible to his professional. Tenser (Robert Redford), in *Three Days of the Condor*, the contrasting world of an actor retained by a strength of conduct, undeniable degradation that prevents to perform a positive social function. Yet *Absence of Malice* begins at the point that *Condor* concludes a newspaper editor and Gallagher is not simply reacting against a duplicated agent of the FBI, but against a man who in which he has the media and the media become synonymous. They are the general, self-referential, morally self-regulating, associated with the resources and lack of scruples to define that own rules.

Ironically, in *Absence of Malice*, it is the law enforcement agency and the press which become parallel in conflict by attacking the reputational campaign against Gallagher, while the media, persuaded by Gallagher's corruption under Mikhaelov's (Lester Adams) energies as the only influential characters with sufficient knowledge and insight to preserve the accused's reputation and supply his evidence with information necessary for effective relationship within the film concludes, the law and media are in conflict while the media was already so, victims of the entire situation, yet controlled by its outcome.

From his first entrance, Gallagher's motivation surprises the film, reserve person of respect that dominates Parton's (Carter) and his common portrait in a series of film examining individualism (in *The Parallel View*, *How Do You Feel*). He enters purposefully through the director's office, shed in Lenny's and back, toward his first showdown. He denounces and his direct, active questioning of Megan immediately draws her off guard. Our confidence in her capability as a journalist is eroded as he becomes weak and defensive. Shook by her status as a reporter and supported by her lawyer and editor, she is eventually threatened and threatened when a confrontation is initiated as a political

struggle beyond her control.

This is a pattern duplicated as scenes throughout the film. Gallagher comes to be the innocent victim in his own, mostly identifies his well-concealed motives, adopts his own tactics and in the end, however, triumphs against and eventually, mysteriously unexplained, is dismissed. The *Standard*, James Rosen's dismissal and the resignation of the District Attorney, Quinn (Don Hertz), who had given Rosen's complete right support in the legal case pressure on Gallagher would result in a solution to the Don case, and improve his public image. Throughout the film, Gallagher takes people around, using his independent strength and clear mission, continuously making others and forcing reaction on his own terms. In attitude and expression, he is the classic cowboy, investigated to analyze Miami, yet operating according to the values of a Western challenging corruption, primarily transmitting the signs of independence, efforts and in the final shot of the film, riding away in victory. He is a man who "goes hard" for knowledge, who has rejected marriage and family life yet as a result of his family and as part of justice, with the media (and a necessary to establish family contacts in an effort to clear his name).

Gallagher's single commitment to the past is a boy called Russ Roberts, raised by his father and grandmother, to ferry bonding against him. When he takes Megan to lunch on the boat, he makes it clear of his character that makes him a truly independent, confident, self-reliant, balanced by short moments of his involvement. He knows when his commitment are being fully revealed, when he is being followed, yet his responses are untroubled. The cowboy subtly observes his environment and responds with economical, effective action when required.

Our glimpse of his personal life, complex, the image. At his release, she who Megan develops, he admits to being in the "Miami Area" on the second of August, fully comfortable only when he takes the initiative. Her suggestion



Gallagher and his "single commitment" in the past.

A boy called Russ Roberts' *Absence of Malice*



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(While Gialletto's selfishly taken down Ron's name in the directory so that he will try and help him out, only to learn he's never in for a fight, that "We don't employ your type here." Ron's frustration and indignation are well represented by his disparity with the over-confident under-developed yet functional character of his friend Phil. Owing a shabby red panel van complete with fainted interior, Ron's "Wessex motor" and "Machismo" practiced gradually on the side of the road by his marginal world through conformity. Phil explains to Ron the virtue of "also taking" and how "this great country of ours was built on the smiling little shit voters."

During the scenery change, Ron struts his style via being progressively crushed into a cube. Despite a surface impression of respect, the image must probably represent Ron's mobility in success, and the secondary way he has taken of Phil's accomplishments in the system.

The anger infused by these relative hardships of freedom and desire soon is highlighted by Ron's anger, yet powerful outburst at the CTS office and forces him to erect a metaphorical fortress against those pressures. His self-let bedroom, established with just an image and control on the outside of his social system, provides him with a psychologically pleasurable refuge into which he withdraws from his depressing reality.

Donning headphones and crouching miserably against a wall, Ron



Ron and Sally answer the People's Address in the big shot Freedom.

displays the eye-opening frustration of his reality with a corresponding eye-opening fantasy. Dressed in the baggy

of fashion is the wheel of a Porsche, he glides effortlessly along a country road, a beautiful woman (Candy Raymond) by his side. These symbols of success, companionship, power and control counterbalance the absence of these elements in his life (though, ironically, Ron's interaction with girls is never unambiguously).

At the factory develops, Ron's grandiosity is moved to an ultimate black vehicle that makes potentionally in Ron's mind, before crashing off the road and down a hill. As he steps to examine the wreckage, his companion drives off, leaving him stranded.

Though the Porsche is Ron's fantasy, but its fate is reality. The crash on a early on the film, the woman promises a driving wife. At first she seems to be capricious, but later she is revealed to be both the owner of the Porsche and Anna Martin, an old friend of Ron's. The implication that Ron deliberately placed her in his fantasy and reality is an inescapable look of recognition when he meets her while discussing her car.

Arriving at Anna's apartment for a date, Ron distributes her phone conversations with her lover, Candy (a minuscule meaningless role for Bud Vigorito), and is angered to learn that she plans to use him in time for her love response to yet another scheme to exploit him. Ron shakes his legs and speeds off with her car in no place in particular.

It is from here that a combination of elements effectively isolate taking the film seriously and, indeed, provides some aesthetically (though) moments in Ron's last the round-Audience laughter.

Ron's unsteady character reveals into his fantasy image his association with Sally, a shifty-driven, thick set woman makes in search of her child played by a graceful, later-downing Bud Cuper's a squad of miserable economic protection and the ultimate paradoxes of Ron's trek through the countryside and the subsequent developments in Freedom of

the slightest tension or concern.

Since obscure, nihilistic statement relating to how our society alienates the individual rendering them powerless, and then laughs at their when they are compelled to escape their tedious existence in the system is rapidly apparent. But never stated as Ron is destroyed. He becomes an artificial, someone lost who, after picking up Sally in a random walk, leaves a car off the road and has the long arm of the law—complete with five officers—after him. Persuading Sally that he is not a homicide suspect, Ron's unconvincing, unconvincing persona is supplemented by Sally's reactions when he displays a remarkable lack of machine or domination. Indeed, he seems to agree to help Sally in the search for her baby in most of any other purpose.

Yet even this potentially involving association established by the best of eyes in Sally's character. Having located his baby's father home, Sally leaves Ron sleeping in his car to return her child. When Ron wakes to see an approaching police car, he runs down road, in a dithering state of approaching misadventure, Sally from her baby to face the police.

Having just been separated from the one individual thing in his life, Sally experiences an intense, whatever a last the moment for the rest of the film. Since that is that, when the past week assistance from a helpful, shifty farm woman, Sally is definitely critical of Ron's naive manner and probably joyful at the way the farmer's wife promises a shipment of tea and a bag of sandwiches for them in about ten seconds time.

This final lack of emotional relief



Ron (John Daball) watches Sally (Sally Dyer) Clapped from her baby to face the police? Ron (John Daball) Freedom.









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# Book Reviews

**Those Fabulous TV Years**  
Brian Davies, Cassell Australia,  
1981 \$14.95

**Australian TV: The First  
25 Years**

Edited by Peter Bailey. Nelson in  
association with Cinema Papers,  
1981 \$14.95

**Turning On Turning Off  
Australian Television In  
The Eighties**

Sandra Hall, Cassell Australia,  
1981 \$11.95

Dave Sargent

Last year marked the Silver Anniversary of television in Australia. In many ways the occasion was promoted, as well as celebrated in a major event by artists and other media.

In the area of book publishing, Cassell Australia and Thomas Nelson, in association with Cinema Papers, took the opportunity to produce three "coffee table" books of the 1980s — glossy outdoor covered volumes with expensive price tags. In comparison with today's increasingly high standard paperback titles. Yet, although they have been rapidly purchased with a wide range of customers in mind — "not a book with your daily coffee" — they do vary in objective, scope and substance.

*Those Fabulous TV Years* by Brian Davies and *Australian TV: The First 25 Years* edited by Peter Bailey, make claims to historiography. In "Introduction" to *Those Fabulous TV Years* Brian Glynn's scathing description of the book as "The History of an Industry" while Peter Bailey, in "Editor's Note" to *Australian TV*, eloquently writes: "Australian TV is not a definitive history, a great deal more research is required to become before this is a possibility."

Both books are histories. *Those Fabulous TV Years* presents a subjective and descriptive text by someone who has firsthand knowledge from working for the ABC and commercial television, while the Bailey book brings together a group of writers who have made different aspects of television their special interest, recently "top developments within TV" and highlights "significant programs, people, institutions and the social position" of television of the last 25 years. Both volumes also represent their writers' literary and personal reminiscence.

However, there is little effort to make sense of these descriptive histories as complex social and political contexts (although Bailey does acknowledge this). No understanding of the status and status of TV is possible in the absence of an adequate historical perspective. As a result, both books (especially Davies) are little more than aesthetically selective trips through a quarter of a century of television programming.

Sentimental pleasure (celebrating people of "what life and past times were like, coming with a favorite programme remembered") can be derived from flipping through past photographs of their cherished and long lost programs, performers and personalities, and intimately through rapidly-fading personal and detailed memory. But it can scarcely be surprising, on nostalgic usually works as a devel-



mentary device to displace our attention away from the important economic, social and political contexts in which Australian television emerged and developed. In this respect the complex role this television plays in the preparation of ideologies and discourses.

It is not that the books don't acknowledge that television has a social function. For instance, Davies writes:

"Arguably, one of the biggest single factors influencing the social changes of the past twenty years has been television."

Like the unresolvable chicken-and-egg arguments about Hollywood and American life, as to whether television art or vice versa, television did or reflected the way in the society, rightly or wrongly as we thought we wanted to be. And located at the Mauser point from 1950 onward we wanted to be a convenient society without end, all that we wanted to see reflected in our television screen, or could it also be put back back down by dream? But that is as far as Davies (as his publisher) allows himself to go. His text then goes from getting involved in anything but the most perfunctory contextualisation about television, after a while this, the anecdote, and a warty cascade of mentions of programs and people begins to bore.

Similarly, Jim Murphy, Bruce Coulter, Greta Huxtable, Andrew McKay, Christopher Day and Ivan Huxtable in *Australian TV* duplicate these shortcomings, though their styles are less statistically scientific in tone.

In addition to merely by their authors, *Australian TV* presents a perfunctory section entitled "The Future of TV" which from 1980 onward, offers young Australians 10 programs, "Upset Award winners and local artists about the industry and the world at large. This is a strange, forced "facts and information" with no interpretation, but it does provide a distant reference to the ever-changing relationship between television and society as it has developed over the years.

There is also a disappointing, unreflected and perfunctory section entitled "Controversial Issues" that reproduces "some memorable moments" at the last 25 years of Australian TV programming, highlighting the obvious TV advertising has undergone. The major interest of this section is to suggest that "controversial" are often minor misreading and more profoundly made than the programs they accompany" rather than assessing the impact of controversies in promoting a consumer-worship society, or analyzing the relationship between television, advertising and the development of television.



Therefore, both books (especially *Australian TV*) are more subjective and impressive for their photographs, illustrations and pocket notes closer to Sandra Hall's *Supernatural 10 Years of Australian Television* (1975), which they have indeed inspired, but more than made up for it with a subsequent text.

Hall has released the same standard in *Turning On Turning Off Australian Television* (1975), and in the same text is complicated by some study introduction of "unconscionable photos."

The statistics behind this book is evidence rather than historiography. Though at the time I am sure the book will profitably attract the instant film on television channels the word "top response" history which is likely of the country's film and television viewers of all politically acknowledge as the use of critical writing they do.

Hall's wrong refers an approach, but for decades of a liberal society, and an understanding that television is (or made due a source of entertainment) or otherwise. The writer from a liberal perspective, but unlike most liberal writers, she does not concern herself as being transcendent, and makes a noticeable effort to place her comments in firm contexts. Thus her commentary is carefully oriented to be as far as possible readers who are put off by up-front "serious criticism" but that does not undermine the impact of what she has to write.

So, in *Turning On Turning Off Australian Television* we have three things:

1. By reviewing programming and analyzing critics, I have discussed what television is providing already and by putting this perspective the more "transcendent" (as I have said about the service we could see at the future).

The strongest chapters are "News," "Public Affairs," "Documentary," and "Sport", and in these she makes











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TITLE	Distributor	PERIOD 4.10.81 to 20.3.82							PERIOD 14.8.81 to 3.10.81						
		WED. <sup>1</sup>	THU.	FRI.	SAT.	SUN.	Total \$	Rank	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.	SUN.	Total \$	Rank
Gallop	RS	(20/10/81) 723,543	(20/11/81) 553,453	(11/12/81) 487,723	(20/1/82) 459,880	(20/2/82) 426,295	2,722,894	1	(2/8/81) 615,615	(7/8/81) 322,000		(8/8/81) 72,005	(15/8/81) 116,586	1,121,181	1
Mad Max 2	RS	(1/7/81) N/A	(1/8/81) N/A	(1/9/81) N/A	(1/10/81) N/A	(1/11/81) N/A	N/A	2							
Puberty Blues	RS	(10/10/81) 454,639	(20/11/81) 284,555	(1/12/81) 141,687	(7/1/82) 124,763	(10/1/82) 148,562	1,142,847	3							
Winter of our Dreams	GUO	(10/1/82) 286,799	(1/2/82) 134,382	(7/2/82) 44,234	(1/3/82) 63,348		508,761	4		(8/7/81) 111,101	(1/8/81) 24,704			135,795	2
The Killing of Angel Street	GUO	(1/2/82) 11,695	(7/2/82) 21,528	(1/3/82) 2813			42,436	5							
Woodwork	Hoyts	(1/2/82) 16,666	(7/2/82) 3821	(1/3/82) 1878			22,377	6							
Race to the Yankee Zephyr	GUO	(7/2/82) 11,644			(1/3/82) 18,466		31,102	7							
Breaker Morant	RS		(1/3/82) 2368	(7/3/82) 3268			5636	8	(1/3/82) 12,404	(7/3/82) 35,818				48,220	4
My Brilliant Career/ Planes of Heaving Rock	GUO	(1/3/82) 4664					4664	9	(7/3/82) 7482					7482	7
Grandel, Grandel, Grandel	Hoyts			(1/3/82) 716			716	10		(7/3/82) 34,827				34,827	5
Aspirin 1981		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		669 161	N/A	\$1,624	43 879	117,082	N/A	
Foreign Tals		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		9 470 685	3 783 746	2 936 854	1 633 386	1 606 816	15 346 128	
Grand Total		6,776,815	6,612,435	4,300,662	2,927,385	2,436,866			6,130,256	N/A	2,966,778	1,717,656	1,717,810	N/A	

\* Not published but available on request

1. Figures for week 10. A. 10. 81.

2. Figures for period of exhibition. These have been adjusted to include material by the Auditor of Film Comptroller.

3. Figures for period of exhibition. These have been adjusted to include material by the Auditor of Film Comptroller.

4. (10. 81) (10. 81) (10. 81)

5. Figures for period of exhibition. These have been adjusted to include material by the Auditor of Film Comptroller.

6. Figures for period of exhibition. These have been adjusted to include material by the Auditor of Film Comptroller.

1. National Theatre, Australia, 1981. 2. Australia, 1981. 3. Australia, 1981. 4. Australia, 1981. 5. Australia, 1981. 6. Australia, 1981. 7. Australia, 1981. 8. Australia, 1981. 9. Australia, 1981. 10. Australia, 1981. 11. Australia, 1981. 12. Australia, 1981. 13. Australia, 1981. 14. Australia, 1981. 15. Australia, 1981. 16. Australia, 1981. 17. Australia, 1981. 18. Australia, 1981. 19. Australia, 1981. 20. Australia, 1981. 21. Australia, 1981. 22. Australia, 1981. 23. Australia, 1981. 24. Australia, 1981. 25. Australia, 1981. 26. Australia, 1981. 27. Australia, 1981. 28. Australia, 1981. 29. Australia, 1981. 30. Australia, 1981. 31. Australia, 1981. 32. Australia, 1981. 33. Australia, 1981. 34. Australia, 1981. 35. Australia, 1981. 36. Australia, 1981. 37. Australia, 1981. 38. Australia, 1981. 39. Australia, 1981. 40. Australia, 1981. 41. Australia, 1981. 42. Australia, 1981. 43. Australia, 1981. 44. Australia, 1981. 45. Australia, 1981. 46. Australia, 1981. 47. Australia, 1981. 48. Australia, 1981. 49. Australia, 1981. 50. Australia, 1981. 51. Australia, 1981. 52. Australia, 1981. 53. Australia, 1981. 54. Australia, 1981. 55. Australia, 1981. 56. Australia, 1981. 57. Australia, 1981. 58. Australia, 1981. 59. Australia, 1981. 60. Australia, 1981. 61. Australia, 1981. 62. Australia, 1981. 63. Australia, 1981. 64. Australia, 1981. 65. Australia, 1981. 66. Australia, 1981. 67. Australia, 1981. 68. Australia, 1981. 69. Australia, 1981. 70. Australia, 1981. 71. Australia, 1981. 72. Australia, 1981. 73. Australia, 1981. 74. Australia, 1981. 75. Australia, 1981. 76. Australia, 1981. 77. Australia, 1981. 78. Australia, 1981. 79. Australia, 1981. 80. Australia, 1981. 81. Australia, 1981. 82. Australia, 1981. 83. Australia, 1981. 84. Australia, 1981. 85. Australia, 1981. 86. Australia, 1981. 87. Australia, 1981. 88. Australia, 1981. 89. Australia, 1981. 90. Australia, 1981. 91. Australia, 1981. 92. Australia, 1981. 93. Australia, 1981. 94. Australia, 1981. 95. Australia, 1981. 96. Australia, 1981. 97. Australia, 1981. 98. Australia, 1981. 99. Australia, 1981. 100. Australia, 1981.



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## The Law of Making Movies

Continued from p. 215

After lunch, the session on industrial issues and politics was marked by a solid consensus of opinion to foreign writers, actors and film technicians from the unions, and a bitter interchange between producer-director Mike Todd and Actors and Announcers Equity Association of America organizer Austin Panatier.

Darryl Williamson, president of the Australian Writers Guild, told the seminar that negotiations with the Film and Television Production Association of Australia over a standardized writers agreement had broken down over the issue of management versus financing. The producers want an assignment of all rights, the writers want to license specific rights only. Williamson predicted that the breakdown meant that producers will end up paying more for scripts and that there will be less good product available in future.

On foreign writers, Williamson said that the AWC's opposition was undoubtedly a defense-of-employment policy. "Many of us in the Guild will go beyond a defense-of-employment policy. I believe that films which have a high percentage of Australian creative talent are the ones most likely in the long run to succeed, both abroad and the American market. Such better American genre films that we wrote well," he said. He then cited the British industry's recent Oscar success with *Chariots of Fire* to back him up.

Panatier criticized Equity's policy on foreign artists and how it was arrived at as a result of members' pressure. A review is necessary, a necessity to align the policy. "Historically, actors have always had to fight for employment. I wonder how many other pro-

fessions have had to fight as hard for the right to employment in their own country?" he queried. Lyn Guiley, recently-elected NSW vice-president of the Australian Theatrical and Amusement Employees Association, spoke of the need for a standard core agreement which would supersede the various agreements currently used to engage actors.

Thorold then attacked Equity over a misrepresentation of the process of obtaining work permits for foreign artists, arguing that Equity members were able to work overseas as should generic and non-generic actors here. The dispute appeared to be about whether Equity had the right to bar foreign actors from the right to consultation with the Department for Employment and Youth Affairs. Panatier insisted that not one film which had been built around overseas actors had done well or won critical acclaim, and anyway since Australian working overseas was not a signifier of merit.

At this point, the apparently trouble-free nature of the film industry evaporated for the legal audience and the conversation turned to the president's job of "walking on water" in the words of one participant, became clear.

Producer Tony Buckley had about the first screen outlining the 17 steps to producing a feature and the necessary contracts to be drawn up at each stage (see box). With his sales success and history, many-eyed spectators Buckley would have pinned for a lawyer himself and did an excellent job of explaining the process of going from an option agreement to the last contract of his 17 steps, the errors and omissions policy.

Buckley described the difficulty as experienced in obtaining the letter for his last released film, *Killing Angel Street*, because of last minute doubts about the beyond-control script. The film began in 1976 with a first draft screenplay and in

the next year became "The Justice Factor." It was their intention to base the film on facts but make a fictional film. In 1978, the script was called "Not in the Public Interest" and, in its next version, which was completely finished, it became "Like Property." Buckley said:

"We had been making period films and we wanted to get more contemporary Australian themes, not to make a bland film but a look at social issues."

As advice from one lawyer, a Queen's Counsel suggested all the way through the film, this was exactly what they had done. They even had one scene which was a disclaimer that the film was about Justice Nathan. Buckley told the seminar that certain property developments in the Kings Cross area had made heavy demands on their lawyers to check the script, but those demands were always refused.

The seminar, which had been planned for 40 lawyers, was initiated by the AFC as part of its industry training scheme. To quote the foreword to the reference materials:

"The contemporary education of lawyers in film law was considered an important part of film production. In an approach was made to the College of Law, an arm of the New South Wales Law Society, which specializes in continuing education. The AFC and the College felt that the seminar should increase the number of legal practitioners having some knowledge and experience of the legal problems and aspects of film industry in the creative business of film production."

Future seminars for Melbourne and perhaps Perth are under consideration by the AFC, as is the creation of a film law society. The reference papers, which include a valuable glossary of terms, a bibliography and notes to cases, as well as examples of key contracts, will be available from June at the AFC and the College of Law.

## Film Contracts: Litigator

Continued from p. 241

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## Joan Fontaine

Continued from p. 239

degenerate granddaughters. I would rather not work in films and do stage work than do that kind of thing. And they have a terrible habit of putting a sharp knife on you and making you look like Bette Davis. I'm tired, really, but I don't want to do it. I don't want to play these parts.

The last thing I saw you in was a television film, "The Usual," with Tom Carty and Warren McGovern, but I didn't greatly enjoy it. Were you attracted to the part there or did you just feel like working?

It was a good part — one that I understood. It was Hedda Hopper and all those gossips. I really knew I knew how they behaved so it was not difficult for me to do it. And again, it was a political thing. I consciously understood the politics of the press in relation to films and film people, and what it's like — society as well.

Do you regret not having worked with any particular directors?

I don't think so.

How about Billy Wilder and Nicholas Ray, with whom you made one film each?

They were an outrage to me in their manner. Nick Ray was just a

nice sparkling guy from Brooklyn and Billy Wilder had been a piano player at a whisthouse in Vienna. So I really did not have a lot in common with them.

Was there any role you didn't play that you would love to have done?

Oh, lots I never saw. From *Here to Eternity*, but I was offered a role. I had film problems at the time and outside problems with my daughter, so I had to turn it down. Several I had to turn down because of trying to be a mother, wife and money-maker, as well as actress. It is a very difficult road to follow.

Looking back on your career, for which roles would you most like to be remembered?

I think I am remembered for *Rebecca*, *The Constant Nymph*, *Jane Eyre* and *Letter From an Unknown Woman*.

Are you happy with that?

Pretty good. Take a writer: how many books can you remember of Ernest Hemingway? If you have four you are remembered for, that's pretty good.

I would like you to add "try" in the last sentence, but these four you mentioned are enough to establish you as a major actress....

Yes, they are all distinguished roles. That's why I don't really need to do anything tricky. I really don't.



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D Worland & Co. is not a public relations firm. We specialise in designing, writing and marketing.

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## Geoff Burrows and Gregory Miller

Continued from p. 212

Burrows: The two are intrinsically inseparable. I don't believe it's possible in the business, unless you are absolutely cynical, and we wouldn't be in this position if we were, to separate the pursuit of excellence from our's objective appreciation of the situation. The pursuit of excellence is an intrinsic to you as getting as your understanding of the meaning.

We're not talking about entertainment in line of art, we're not talking about entertainment in line of craft. It is art and craft disciplined, orientated, interpreted and controlled.

It is not because we are doggy that we make something simple. To

arrive at the result, we had to have a greater comprehension of art and craft, and to have more academically pursued excellence than the artists who achieve the implicit discipline, who don't recognize the beauty in which you can take one's craft. Simplicity and clarity of statement can only be arrived at after complex consideration – ask Albert Einstein or George Bernard Shaw!

What do you mean by "natural"?

Burrows: Well, its meaning is apparent, isn't it?

Miller: "A film by..." is almost a guarantee. There is only one person that ever did that well, and that was Alfred Hitchcock.

Burrows: He was not consciously, a consummate crafts-

man. That's why his reputation is as it is, not because he made artistic films at great statements.

But don't you agree that a film or book can have meaning that even the director or author doesn't?

Burrows: If something happens in a film that you don't intend, that's luck, what were you doing? What was your mind? That's the point.

That's not to dismiss moments of magic, what something happens that isn't a performance to design lightly the way in which you see the story.

How will people in 50 years view "Sneaky River"?

Miller: People will be able to say, "That is what Australia looked like

in the 1880s." If the film contributes anything to Australian history, it is a framing of what the 1880s and 1890s looked like.

It is also the indication of 20 years' research on the part of the art director, Len Berra. People don't realize that now, but they may in 50 years' time.

Burrows: I think people will look back on *Sneaky* as a rather quaint and a winning little film made by a bunch of fancy people in the first way in that looks back on films such as *Mad Hatter*, which were brilliant experiments in their day and have stood the test of time.

Miller: If the Australian public looks upon our film as badly as they looked upon Ken Hall's, then I'll be a happy person. He really knew his craft. ■

## Book Reviews

Continued from p. 275

### Philosophy

*The Philosophy of Charles – The Making of a Philosopher* by John G. Gribben. (New York: Basic Books, 1987, \$19.95.)

The work of the master of the modern philosophy has been the subject of a number of books. This book is a study of the work of Charles, which was the subject of the book (Charles) and the book (Charles) in the history of philosophy.

### History of the Sciences

*The History of the Sciences* by John G. Gribben. (New York: Basic Books, 1987, \$19.95.)

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### Science Fiction

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## Film Insurance/Guide

Continued from p. 237

## Requirements for an upcoming production?

Hopely, one would like to be offered in quite early, when the budgets are being put together, and even before the final decisions about shooting. Often, before issues have been arranged — by providing detail for the production budget — one can learn by indicating a many structure according to the script. Obviously, a film bearing a degree of hazard — with a number of stunt operations and exploding props — will carry a different rating structure in a film more principally shot in a studio. Use of helicopters and locations for filming, for example, also affects this.

So, the earlier we are called into the project, the better. Unfortunately, until recently, insurance was often the last thing considered by film producers. Companies were not even required to begin with, with shooting scheduled to begin in three. The days of such productions have certainly gone by the board. Thankfully, solicitors, accountants, investors and especially producers now realize that the earlier a broker becomes involved, the better.

It doesn't matter whether you are dealing with a film project in Australia or even in the important thing is that the more information

you can provide the underwriter, the more detail you collect, the more you can display an intimate knowledge of the script, the greater the chances of obtaining a better rate. If you can't provide the underwriters with such complete details, they will assign a rate which builds in the possibility of risk. The more you tell them, the more accurate the rate will be and the better it will look on the overall budget figures being prepared for investors and producers.

Provided we, as brokers, have all the information at hand, we can successfully advise our underwriters of the suggested rate. And it is very rare that we have this rate offered by them. In the event that there is any filtration, the producers will know ahead of time in 24 hours. Distance between broker and underwriter is of no commercial consequence with this style of relationship.

How many types of insurances are there with which the film producer and his investors — must be concerned?

There are two basic types of insurances, covering a wide range of implications. There are the Special Film Insurances, pertaining to the filming of the production project, the actors of the project, the props sets, wardrobe, equipment etc. Then there are the Company Insurances which comply with various requirements of state law. These insurances are

the domestic types which apply to any commercial operation. Workers' Compensation, Public Liability, Motor Vehicle Compensation, Payroll and so forth.

In the category regarding film production insurances, we usually cover common key people such as the director, perhaps the director of photography, and all important artists involved during the production period. If any mishap befalls these key people, it may affect the outcome of the project.

Next comes Film Producer's Indemnity (FPI), or Cast Insurance, which insures various actors, director of photography, the director, sometimes even the producer, these people who, if they become ill or were injured during production, could affect the continuity of the shooting schedule. Remember, the daily cost of production in Australia could be from \$15,000 to \$100,000.

Let's say it is \$50,000 and our average production works a 35-hour day, six-day week. If shooting begins in a commercial person and production around a certain situation cannot continue for several days, all wages, living costs, rentals and so forth must continue to be paid. That \$50,000 a day is not negligible — and that is the basis of the Producer's Indemnity. So, that \$50,000 a day is a better bit of money. Think about a budget of around \$100,000 a day.

Then we have Negative All Risk or Negative FPI Risk (NFR). This

protects the film and master print stage, during the period from the stock through to the editing, mixing and negative of master tracks. If anything happens to this material during this stage of production, the film may have to be re-shot. Or, if sufficient of it is damaged or destroyed, abandonment may have to be considered.

This insurance is particularly useful. The FPI lasts only the period of the production, after which the assets go their various ways. The Negative All Risk could go on for as long as weeks after completion of the shoot. This is why the budget figure for NFR is often the highest because it is covering a greater part of the overall production budget.

The next type of risk is called Props, Sets and Wardrobe, and covers the replacement of these items, which may run into several hundred thousands of dollars. Also insured is the listing of miscellaneous items of equipment — cameras, lenses, lighting gear and so on — which are equally expensive to replace or repair.

Next, there is Extra Expense insurance. This covers the daily cost of the production company against something happening to the asset, causing the halting of the schedule. It is particularly important in its destruction and must be rebuilt, everyone must continue to be paid during that reconstruction. The sum is covered, and so too is the extra expense incurred through its destruction or damage. With large

## Film Insurance/Continue

Continued from p. 238

buying cheap, basic insurance there is very little benefit when a claim arises later.

McLennan: I would mention that we do have one financial advantage over foreign insurers. We don't have to pay any withholding taxes and, at a stroke, we don't have extra costs of that kind to pass on to clients.

How will your idea of rewarding producers with good track records work?

McLennan: On an individual basis for individual producers. It may mean rewarding them with better rates because of their previous track record, or it may mean rewarding them in the end of a production with some sort of no-claim rebate.

Does Cinsure offer any services or advantages that aren't already available for film and television producers?

McLennan: As a starting point, we offer cover in ways as wide as that offered by any insurer in the world, which includes Errors and Omissions, Producers' Liability

and Negative Film Insurance, for example. The fact that we are in Australia means that we are able to discuss fully with any producer his or her policy needs, which can't be done with overseas insurers, many thousands of miles away. We are therefore better able to discuss tailor-made policies to suit every producer. We think our service will prove to be more personal, as well as being speedier and more flexible.

Lipman: That's right. We are here in Australia. We can discuss their insurance needs and problems directly with our clients and give them immediate decisions, which can't be done when you are dealing with overseas insurers. More important, if there is a loss, we are here on the spot to pay it. We are authorized to pay losses up to \$10,000 immediately to any film producer who has a justified claim. And larger claims will be processed quickly here in Australia. Finally, there is the advantage of the protection of the Commonwealth Insurance Act.

Does the 'Insurance Act' make that much difference?

Lipman: I believe it does. It is always being referred to most Australians as the 'Great Australian Guarantee' because it is an award-

ment for the further protection of the Australian public.

An interesting thing about the Act, by the way, is that it demands a statutory margin with Australian insurance companies — that is a substantial differential between assets and liabilities — whereas overseas companies don't have to meet this criterion because the Insurance Commissioner has no authority over them.

But the 'Act' does not offer protection in the event of a dispute over a claim, does it?

Lipman: No it doesn't involve procedures for the settlement of disputes but it aims to make sure that the insurance company treating the business is financially sound. Another interesting point here is that if anyone has a legal dispute with an Australian insurance company, it can be settled in Australia courts. The policy holder would not have to take his case to a court in, say, Los Angeles, which could happen with an overseas insurer. And it's obvious what an expensive proposition that would be.

You are aiming to service the film and television industry throughout Australia. Yet Cinsure's only office is in Melbourne. How do you find brokers have offices in all the major

State capitals. So how will you service clients outside Sydney?

Lipman: At present, Cinsure itself has only an office in Sydney, although its parent company (Termco Lipman Pty Ltd) is represented in all parts of Australia and throughout the world. The four companies for which we act have offices in every city and major town in the country. Nevertheless, we believe it is best that Cinsure itself operates from a single, centralized office. This is because we know from previous experience that specialist insurance is most efficiently handled by fewer experts in a single point.

So, the experience of many offices would only make delay in any business would have to be referred to the central office anyway. After all, if you go to a broker's office, or, say, Perth, that office is going to have to refer your enquiry to its head office in Sydney and, and so on, of course, it would then have to be referred to an insurer overseas. At Cinsure, we are ready to help on a plane at any time to do business with a client in any part of Australia. And, frankly, that's also cheaper than maintaining offices throughout the land. These offices would only incur extra costs which are rarely worth to be passed on to the clients. \*



production, Eclair Eclair may cover up to \$1 million worth of additional expenditures.

Thus, there is Third Party Property Damage and Loss of Use Hiring of camera and equipment to offset a significant share of the production budget. If something happens to that equipment and a start is required, the hiring costs will continue to be paid until that equipment is back in operation. The hiring company will, of course, supply another camera, but will insist that hiring charges be paid for both cameras until the first is fixed, and is therefore heretofore again. This covers loss of revenue from loss of use to the hiring company, and is a typical example of this type of insurance cover.

There are two other areas of cover which were not always considered essential, but appear to have become so recently. The first is Human and Dismemberment, which protects the production company — and thus the investors — against lawsuits involving libel or defamation, plagiarism and so forth. This insurance may be taken from one to three years from the date required, and continuously renewed if required.

The other area is not an insurable risk, but a financial risk, and is now becoming a necessary part of the business. It is called Completion Guarantee. We are not involved in this area, but it basically guarantees that, if a project goes over budget, the film is completed and paid for by the completion guarantor. Since we are raising money and want upon this type of guarantee, either on their behalf or investors. If called upon, we will advise the terms of companies that are in this business.

**How has the introduction of the Federal Government taxation concessions in the film industry affected your brokerage?**

The concessions have meant a great deal to the production companies of Australia, attracting bigger budgets and a greater volume of production generally. In that respect, it has enabled us to have greater involvement in the business. And as the budgets have become larger the whole area of business has become much more sophisticated in terms of structure offered in our product today, that's timely.

**Agent from Adair's insurance connections with the industry, how the company can be seen as investor in Australian film?**

As Australian brokers for more than 20 years, we have always believed we should put our money where our mouth is, that whatever

investments we make with any profits should be in the areas of business which we are principally concerned with.

We have invested in several Australian theatrical and film production over the years — in fact, in eight films to date. All our investments were made in the production area, it was purely risk investment. We will continue to invest in films on a selective basis.

**As an Australian company with substantial international connections and access to their facilities, what do you consider the overall benefits of such connections to your clients?**

We have a wide range of facilities available from local, to Lloyd's and other London markets, to Russia and The Freeman's Fund in the U.S. These cover the best list of contacts in the business, contacts we value as our best abilities to the advantage of our Australian clients. Hence, good news.

It is significant that last year Alfred G. Ruben and Co. and The Freeman's Fund made a conscious decision to enter the Australian market. Ruben is the sole worldwide underwriter for The Freeman's Fund Insurance Company, and in 1981 Scott Miller, Ruben president, came to Australia to investigate the market. It is, naturally, a matter of great pride to ourselves that Adair was appointed sole representative for the company in Australia and New Zealand. Such companies — considering The Freeman's Fund is the largest in the business — are not inconspicuous to our clients. Our servicing, due to the industry in Australia and New Zealand has broadened considerably. We now have client production companies growing up for itself in the South Pacific, Greece, Yugoslavia and Germany, and using various overseas laboratory facilities.

It is also important to underline that this recent lesson, in particular, has brought into Australia a long and established list of industry connections, and links of other national contacts in a project. The logical consequence is that he will be requested to contact Adair upon arrival. If he doesn't already have the contacts, we will put him in touch with the right people in the Australian market: collectors who may specialise in film-making, the media, distribution, PR, people from other resources. Conversely, these benefits and introductions are available to our Australian clients during visits to the U.S. or Europe.

The greatest benefit of such a liaison, however, is the strength of experience on both sides. The better the quality of information provided and information given, the better the premium rate from the beginning. And that is the key most affecting the bottom line.

**What actually happens in the event of a claim? How simple is the settlement procedure?**

There are claims all the time in the Australian film business. Fortunately, to date, there has been no dramatic claim of the Natalie Wood variety, where the actress met her death at a vital stage of a project. One of these days, however, I believe it will happen.

In the event of a normal claim, someone familiar with the pace of business are available to investigate and assess the claim. With much of the small claims business, such as the breakdown of a piece of equipment, the information is already at hand and it is often unnecessary to send an assessor to the scene. The information is simply gathered and dispatched to the underwriter. Once we receive advice that the claim has been accepted and that official confirmation of payment is to be made, we can settle the claim on behalf of the underwriters.

A claim may arise, however, which can be disputed, but not finished in its value until the film is completed. There may be a great deal of detail to be sorted out with the production accountant and others involved, and final cost of the claim can be established and payment is completed.

It is important to note that we have a network of experienced executives able to advise on claims procedures on the spot.

**What lessons does Adair have at present?**

Over the past few months, we have handled something in excess of \$20 million worth of insured value of feature films, as well as a constant run of documentaries, commercials and small production. Feature film budgets range from \$750,000 for the films of four two-minute commercials to \$10, to a \$7 million feature.

When feature films are taking off toward the end of the financial year, film production costs become a heavy loading documentary and other commercial business when carried over, through until July/August when film production starts again.

We are currently quoting on more Australian feature films in the industry year for the new financial year, and four major production in New Zealand.

**From your standpoint, what changes have you seen in production values over the past decade of close involvement?**

The budgets in the early 1970s

went as low as \$200,000 for a feature film, and now we are dealing with \$7 million and upwards. Back then, \$300,000 was considered large.

Over the past 10 months, in particular, local budgets have increased dramatically in line with the increased number of films in production. Values have been rising steadily over the years as film crew salaries, more experienced, and wages and inflation take their course. One of our clients, for whom we insured a film worth \$293,000 in 1972, is now producing a film worth \$2.5 million. That is indicative. It is difficult to produce a worthwhile feature film for less than \$1 million today, considering the quality of sets, locations, crew, actors and equipment necessary to ensure a good chance at local and international commercial success.

**Given your own and your company's experience in Australian film, what is your opinion of the present state of the industry, and its likely future?**

Perhaps only the Tomorrow man prophesying the future of the industry, he is the only one who knows what is going to happen is right to be silent.

However, over the years I have seen the quality and expertise exhibited in Australian film improve out of sight. The mix of things of experienced people — Australians going overseas and international coming here — has been of tremendous value to the development of our producers, crew, directors, camera and script. Our vision, I believe, could see a little more of this interchange to polish the edges.

The experience has made an incredible difference to our growth. That is probably one of the reasons as much interest as now found in Australian film.

There must be a very good reason why Australians can secure good acting roles in foreign films, why Australian directors, cameramen and other professionals are being sought internationally. It is because they are very good at their craft.

Generally, the Australian industry is becoming a very sophisticated operation. And that will continue, provided we don't get into the area of how shall we say, underfunding, as we have seen in Britain and Europe, provided we don't develop the type of temperamental crisis, which will walk off the set thereby causing inflated costs through production halts.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of our industry today is the level of dedication inherent in our artists and production professionals. If we can continue to work that way, with dedicated people working hard and being fairly remunerated, I can see nothing but a good and solid future for Australian production. ■



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## James Ivory

Continued from p. 219

that these protagonists in achieving a genuine release of emotional tensions and a satisfying sense of the richness of one culture, and of culture, upon another.

That they render as much of James' vision as they do is not due just to the director's fidelity to the original or to the intelligence with which it is tackled. It is essentially a matter of the rare, unobtrusive handling of retrospection in the "European" (ostensibly American) characters (and the New Englanders feel their way into and around each other's understanding: Egmont [Lee Remick], the Russian Minister, mercenary wife of a German prince), and her brother Felix (Tim Woodward), an artist manque, approach their American counterparts, the Westworths, in different frames of mind. Each wants something from the visit: Egmont wants a fortune ("That's always interesting," is her reply to learning that the Westworths' neighbor Robert Acton has died; Felix is determined to be entertained and, though he will be pleased if his efforts are rich, it is not a condition of his return). Egmont, with her shrewd sense of purpose, loses her chance with Acton (Ruba Lewis) whose Yankee grandeur is a match for her sophistication. Felix, ironically, finds it has left her Gertrude Westworth (Lise Eichhorn) the same as she has been missing from his life.

By somewhat surprisingly omitting the novel's opening chapter which so deftly establishes the different approaches of brother and sister to America, Ivory and his collaborators have undervalued the importance James places on the cultural gap between them and their New England cousins. The novel is far from being a scholarly treatment of Old World sophistication (and, incidentally, American innocence) — or of the state of mind of moral repression in decadent Europe — and the film and novel make such simplistic terms of representation. However, it also takes a promise that would make the Ivory-aided individual relationships mean more if not more fully in a context of cultural difference.

The American setting is extensively realized in Ivory. Peter's glowing images of a sun-blessed declining into wistful nostalgia, of the solid, simply elegant Westworth house, and of a series of lovely tracking shots along streets, across fields, up staircases and over bridges. The European influence has to make itself felt in less tangible ways. It is in the opening shots of European stately — which quickly give way to decadence and sketches of sailing ships, and New England scenes, all of these belong the credits. But it is more important to be felt in differences of dress (Egmont's thin-black bellows contrast with the pastel softness of the Boston ladies), in ways of standing and sitting, of looking and walking.

Nevertheless, our sense of these differences would have been unnecessarily relaxing James' opening scene. To begin as Ivory does, with Gertrude Westworth's unadorned discontent, certainly establishes her life as waiting for an experience that will give it direction, and Felix appears on the scene as if in answer to her unspoken need for a fresh impulse in her life. This is all played with delicacy and restraint, and the girl's reticence is sharp, and dramatically at odds with the film's social and moral imagery — a sensibly loose sitting and "Shall we gather at the river?" as the landscape. For as in this, the scene works against the centrality the book gives to Egmont — a centrality the film also wants to insist on — and slightly undercuts Lee Remick's effectiveness



Felix (Tim Woodward) greets Gertrude (Lise Eichhorn) for her parents. *The Europeans*

in the role. Without seeing her earlier, Felix's unhappy response to America, we are less moved that we might be by her sudden access of graceful emotion when she says to her uncle (Wesley Addy) "I should like to stay here than like me in."

This is my one serious complaint about the film's adaptation. The film is not perfect Ivory: there are some inevitable compromises, particularly in comic moments like that in which Felix asks Mr. Westworth if he may marry Gertrude and Mr. Board (Norman Maxwell), Gertrude's other uncle, a charlatan, stands among witnesses, holding in a darker New England tradition. It is a perfect irony either it does occasionally larger when it ought to move on as if it could hardly last itself away from the beauty of New England in the fall. However, *The Europeans* is an immensely attractive film, making Ivory's preoccupations and strengths at their most distinctive and distinguished. The cross-cultural tensions previously examined in the context of East-West relations in modern India, or in the allegorical situation of Soviet-Jewish emigration in a decadent museum in *Savages* (1975) is film I have not been able to see and one which sounds tantalizingly typical, are here explored in a loosely recorded corner of America's heritage from age. Essentially, though, marriage in December Bazaar's setting is in Ivory's characteristic trust in his actors, in their faces above all, that allows him to approach the subtle shifts of James' prose.

The cast, especially Remick, Ellis, Eichhorn, Addy, and Helen Stenborg (as Mr. Acton), show a striking capacity to speak dialogue of a subtle realism, unusual in film. Perhaps even more significantly, I mean to draw attention to the faces — to the unobtrusive richness with which they have been chosen, to their flexibility in instruments of meaning, and to the way Ivory treats them with so much of the film's beauty. The film's grammatical staple is the constructed motion shot of one or other of these eloquent faces, and Ivory is right to treat these. The tracking shots, the beautifully and naturally composed two-shots and groupings around tables, in gardens, or by hearths, all make their points with quiet richness, but again and again we are drawn back to the faces. The confident direction of Helen Ellis' Acton set against the worldly knowledge of Lee Remick's Egmont

to create the proper sexual change, or the two kinds of goodness reflected respectively in the gentleness of Helen Stenborg's Mrs. Acton and the stern outburst of Wesley Addy's Mr. Westworth: these are discriminations achieved by a director and cinematist who knew what a camera can make the right face reveal.

**T**he Europeans has been the most popular of Ivory's films to be shown here, then without busy night, it is also common without being obscure. Its emotional territory has points of contact with many of his other films but, the approach to it has been accessible to larger audiences. Certainly there was scarcely an audience as all for *Hallmark* over *Georgia and Bonnie's Pictures* made the previous year (1976) for British television. Its story is seemingly distant to western audiences, Lady G (Faye Ashcroft) a peer for a London museum, and Clark Hosen (Garry Perv), an independent American collector, are both on acquiring the priceless Turner miniature paintings held in a Mishkany's palace. Western opportunism exploits what it erroneously takes to be Indian artistry, as Lady G wears "Georgia", the present Mishkany whose grandfather collected the paintings, and Hosen sets out to claim "Bonnie", the Mishkany.

From this slender thread, Ivory and Hubsch have woven a texture of remarkable richness. The recurring preoccupations of one culture impacting on another, of people exploring each other, are belatedly stirred by Hubsch's screenplay. In this case, Hubsch has gone further, concerned himself with other issues of large significance, such as the purpose of art in life and the ways in which works of art make and master. These issues — and that is one of all the best of the scene's first — are set down up as matters for discussion or as captions to scenes, they arise separately from the particulars of writers, love, sex, and playing. John Fry, reviewing the film for the *Monthly Film Bulletin* (May 1976), sums up and exemplifies the way "The cases are put for both art and life. When the collection is shown for the second time in silence (on the first occasion, the picture's 'message' is glossed by Hosen's exposition), the sequence of tranquil images effortlessly reduces the



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characters' squabbles and discontents to insignificance.

*Muksha* has been an unmitigated disaster in the cinema, over many (but not every, it is a satirically apocryphal remark) And, yet, I can't help feeling that it is really best valued to reinforce it is essentially a small-screen subject, intricately and lovingly treated, even if one rejects *Sight and Sound's* televisualist in describing it as "the supreme little movie" (in spite of the praise and three stars in its Film Guide, Summer 1979, *Sight and Sound* did not bother to review it, though appearing to rate it as one of the most impressive films of the quarter). With its impeccable sense of place, elegantly croaked by Vishnu Laxully's camerawork and acting beyond praise from Peggy Ashcroft, Ayesha Sea ("Buriya"), Vinita Banerjee ("Geeta") and Sumit Jitendra (the Nawab, in charge of the collection), it would surely have denied the sort of audience and appreciation recently accorded *Staying On*, that other touching and funny tale of the end of the Raj. *Johnnie*, interviewed in *Sight and Sound* Winter 1978/79, has said: "Essentially, I think a television play is a people played up in a room talking." "Essentially," that may be the case, rarely, though, are they given such resonant and witty things to say as they are in *Muksha*.

**T**he two Ivory-Merchant short films I have been able to see — *Muksha* and the *Mat* (1972) and *Helin — Queen of the Nautch Girls* (1973) — have their points of interest and touches of charm. *Muksha* and the *Mat* (by producer and directed by Merchant) is a possible shot on *Bombay's* lake beach, focusing on a little beach boy (Said Khadi) who scavenges for food and, perhaps improbably, has a monkey for company. He engages in conversation with an at-first-onion audience which proves to

be a statue of Gandhi. Around the statue, a prosperous, condescending audience gathers for a service about "polly love," followed by an all-night raga during which the boy is pulled out from under the table and sent away hungry. So much for Gandhian principles, as the film ends with the boy walking sulkily on the beach that night and the camera moves in for a sad final close-up.

A summary makes it sound better than it is, but there is no doubt a certain sentimentalism in the concept and some schematic touches in Taravoor Parvathi's screenplay (a woman finding a definition refuses the boy food). It nevertheless offers some telling ironic observations on the way one cultural group can ignore another's needs, not wishing to be disappointed by signs of real deprivation. Perhaps in counterpoint to its end and its story, it is always lovely to look at its Subarna Maruti's gaudy costumes.

*Helin — Queen of the Nautch Girls*, written by Ivory, produced by Merchant and directed by Anthony Konev, had a brief "topping" season at Melbourne's Lyttelton Cinema. Though it is a documentary and not even directed by Ivory, it is a useful film to note in conclusion. The film's commentary (by Konev's records — "women") — the singular family of traditional Indian dance form since superseded in the public taste by mindlessly long (3 to 4 hour) musical films whose success depends on the popular Helen. The film offers highlights from Helen's films, much culled, if often bitterly so, by Hollywood, and then re-cut narrowly. Ann Miller, Vera Ellen, Joyce Matthews and Cyd Charisse, though Helen herself has not changed and character. These latter are seen in bits in her make-up table talking about her difficult early years, her English father and Burmese mother, and her shared account of her future — "probably character actor," and perhaps "a housewife in the Sheraton Hotel — something grossy."

The film's irony is that genuinely sincere and talented and happy popular as Helen is, her film career is a sad and deplorable one of an art fate with a long history. Against this view, and perhaps more insidious, the fact is that, "Even until tonight all these concepts fantasize a new folk art," when they are clearly no more than camp. Helen's films offer glimpses of luxury and excess, and of an otherwise awe-inspiring industry. They are frequently set in a suburban world, a world of distinction for the female, and which bring a taste of forbidden luxury, liquor and western decadence. The big dance number — and the documentary makes generous use of Helen's films — is always the film's top spectacular moment and a further song, in a modest, grossy way, is also the portrait of professionalization in Indian film.

*Helin — Queen of the Nautch Girls* is a scene from Ivory's *Bombay Tale* in which Helen and the film's star Shashi Kapoor, dance on the legs of a huge typewriter. A scene from a film about filmmaking and an almost self-Bollywood production number is a good metaphor for the recurring preoccupations of human beings (no film could have without film) and it is the result of one culture having collided with another.

### Postscript

At the time of writing, I have just learnt that the next Merchant-Ivory production, begun in February 1982, is a film version of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's novel, the remarkable *War and Dust*, adapted by the author. The film stars Julie Christie, Christopher Cazenove and Shashi Kapoor who seem ideal casting for the central roles of Anna, Ruth, widowed wife of the British Officer who married Douglas, and the local Nawab with whom Oliver has an affair which alters her life.

### Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Andrew Pike of Radio Films, Canberra, in making several of the Merchant Ivory films available to me and for providing photographs and other information relating to them. In particular, I wish to thank him for his support of the following comments on the cinema history of the Merchant Ivory films distributed by Kino.

*Autobiography of a Princess* was screened extensively at Melbourne in a supporting feature in "art" and repertory cinemas and received excellent reviews. It was never adequately released in Sydney but had great commercial success as a main feature at Canberra. It has been repeated repeatedly by ABC networks, though it has been heavily used by film societies.

*Bombay Tale* had a somewhat hostile review in Australia except in *The Canberra Times*. It had mixed commercial success but rather positive reviews in the Canberra, Sydney and the Western Sydney Cinemas. Sydney and slightly better commercial results in Canberra. In general it has been "minor" released and widely discussed.

*Helin* (and *Geeta* and *Bombay's* Pictures) had minor theatrical releases in Sydney (at the Waldorf) and Melbourne (at the Silver Screen) with excellent reviews and very poor results. Again it had some commercial success in Canberra and very heavy demand from film societies.

*Just Anna* in Melbourne suffered a commercially very poor season at Melbourne's Empire Bay Town but had fair commercial success at Canberra, its reviews ranged from respectful to positive. But it has to be stressed as an interest from film societies and repertory cinemas.

*Robert Films* is comfortably at par with *Autobiography* and *Helin* but has more serious side projects of this happening with *Bombay Tale* or *Just Anna*.

<sup>1</sup> The interest in manager Michael White, Ltd. me that the biggest audience were not too different from demographic trends in the film.



A dance performance in the Melbourne's picture. James Ivory's *Muksha* (Deer Group and *Bombay's* Pictures)



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## Dag Williams

Comment from p. 243

extraordinary work within the time and budget available. I must admit I never believed we were going to pull off a lot of the shots that we did.

Gary Haines is a true DOP [director of photography] and is wonderful at pulling his team together and very supportive to the director. Having just seen *Bad Blood*, which he shot in New Zealand, I think Gary will soon be recognized as one of the finest lighting cameramen in Australia.

*Next of Kin* is a stylish film, and before we started shooting, I storyboarded every frame of film, with a clear plan of each scene. And I think it was the first time Steadicam had been used in Australia where it was totally part of the film equipment and not something added in for a special day. We used an Arm B1, mounted onto the Steadicam, which Toby set up with the help of John Barry John and his assistants were fantastic and really got the whole system going.

Toby had just come back from a work's cruise with Gareth Brown in Los Angeles, so he knew exactly how *The Shining* had been shot and what systems they had used. He felt it was not really worth doing Steadicam unless you had a totally unique idea to use Steadicam all through the film, but not in such a way that people would know it was Steadicam. Also, I was worried it might take longer to set up than laying tracks and using a dolly.

A lot of Australian directors have found, including myself, an uncomfortable, that while it may look a simple machine to use it can take so long to set up — probably if you use an inexperienced operator — that you might as well use a dolly or a crane. So we decided that if we were going to use it, we would do so according to Toby's conditions and requirements.

It was fantastic because Gary and I were in a position to say, "Right, here is the shot, as storyboarded. Now bear can you achieve it?" We would spend a couple of minutes on the dolly, and then say, "Let's go Steadicam."

Toby had five minutes to wrap-up, when on the monitors and play everything in. We found that it could move just as fast as it takes you to lay tracks. In fact, a lot of scenes in the film you wouldn't realize were Steadicam because they weren't designed to be in Steadicam. About 40 was easier than using a dolly. And in many scenes we used a combination of a crane, tracking shots, Steadicam and hand-held shots. Even some static wide-shots were shot Steadicam because it was easier to shoot it that way than take the Steadicam off Toby.

I am totally convinced this is the

only way to use Steadicam.

**What were some of the things Toby taught back from the on-work course?**

Mainly the experience of being an operator. You find a lot of Steadicam people who say that when you are running through a forest, or moving it about, it is very hard to keep it rock steady. You can't do the sort of things you could with a crane or a dolly. In some cases, that is still true. You wouldn't try to shoot a 180-degree track on an Arm low around somebody on Steadicam, you would use curved tracks and a dolly.

Again, that, when Toby had seemed over and precision had been being able to operate the Steadicam rock steady as if the camera were on a tripod. So, you could start with a frame that was totally static and well framed, and, as a given signal, look it with someone as if the camera were on a dolly. At the end of the movement, you could stop rock steady, again with a pleasing composition. And then if the action moved, you could lift or pan again. So there was the feeling that the camera was on a dolly.

On the hardware side, Toby brought back a way of mounting the Steadicam to the SK, could be put on it and also a transmitter, rather than cables. We had a master control monitor set with a video recorder, so that we could videotape the takes. There were also hand-held, battery-operated receivers for the sound man, continuity girl and the director of photography to see what was being shot.

The system worked so well that we ended up using it over if we weren't shooting on Steadicam. We would videotape scenes and then play them back. We found we were making decisions faster as to whether to go with a take or continue working for a better one.

**Is there a limitation in the time you can use on the Steadicam system?**

Yes. You wouldn't use Steadicam if you were trying to shoot a very exact long lens shot for example, an 18mm tracking shot around somebody in the bed, as we had in our film. It would be easy for Gary to control to shoot on tracks. One of the problems in the lower pillar has to be on 1 dimensions, he can't make marks on the ground as you would with a dolly, because there is always variance with the Steadicam operator. The focus puller has to be in a whole new system.

**I have heard, for example, that the Steadicam is best suited with a 32mm lens, which is fairly wide angle...**

Longer lenses do create problems from a focus point of view and they

are harder to operate. But we did shoot some scenes with an 18mm lens and quite a lot of scenes with a 50mm. Generally speaking, however, if you are going to do tracking shots across broad areas, you would want to use 32mm or wider.

**The film has an unusual light quality, such as the slightly eerie white light when Linda and Barry (John Jarrett) run across the paddocks...**

You it is typical Hansen lighting. I started light at some length with Gary and we looked at a lot of tapes together. One was *Last Tango in Paris*, which is a film I enjoy very much technically. It is a suspenseful film — particularly from the point of view of lighting.

There are a lot of scenes in our film where we had worked out the lighting long before we had started shooting. All the scenes with cars reflected in the bedrooms and on the girl's face, for instance, was designed to be part of the lighting. Beyond that, Gary used a lot of quartz halide lights to give the film a classic look, and proved for several scenes — very beautiful. This was carried right through the props and the whole dress of the film.

I would have liked to have done more than we had the facilities to do. The film was late starting and the art department was short of people. They couldn't start until the finance came through, and, by the time they were given the word to go, their pre-production work had been halted. But we had made use of the budget by having an enormous number of decisions. Gary said it was the most prepared film he had worked on, as did most of the crew. Because of all that decisions time, we looked down virtually every shot in the film.

I discussed with the art director the sets and what we could afford to build. Then I storyboarded and shot-based the film. We even rebuilt a set to accommodate certain shots. If we were to go on to be shooting at 10 am from the floor, or on an 18 mm problem, we altered the sets to accommodate. In that sense, it was very well planned.

**Do you have a few close shots? You seem to get pretty close to walls...**

We used combinations. On some scenes we shot with Steadicam in the narrow room. Some scenes we shot with props on slung arms, and some dolly shots were actually rigged from the ceiling. The camera was dropped onto the floor and operated remotely.

**The last shot looks rather ludicrous. How was it done?**

It involved standing on a crane shot about eight metres in the air and dropping into a close-up of Linda White, that was happening, the camera then had to be stretched

onto the back of the truck. Linda got into the truck and drove off with the camera crew in the back. The camera crew then had to execute a 180-degree pan and, instead of seeing the lights, the camera crew and the crane, they had had to see an antique building being blown up. It took the crew, Nick Macdonald, three weeks to build the equipment to make that possible, and it took as three days just to rehearse that one shot.

Probably the person who had had the hardest job on that day was Jackie Kerr, because there wasn't time to worry about her performance. If she and I didn't get the car it would have blown the day's shoot. There were 14 people at one stage rushing around behind the camera, screwing bolts, laying charges, pulling you out, releasing jacks and throwing sandbags on cranes all while she was in front of camera.

The shot had to be taken at exactly 3.30 p.m. when the sun was just dipping behind the hill. It took an hour to take the crane up for the shot, so if we missed it, by the time we came back to reshoot it, it was too dark. Also, Chris Murray had to fly charges in the building so that the camera the track nose off and the crane drop out of shot, the car was made but as it could then, when the camera failed, started blowing up. We were pretty upset, too.

Everyone was amazed that the shot worked. No one believed we were going to pull it off. In fact, at 10 a.m. we were told we couldn't shoot because there was a fire bug. The producers had to chase up the CFA all day for permission. Finally we did get permission, but only if we had eight fire appliances on hand before we were allowed to shoot.

**What sort of post work did the camera?**

It is back to commercials and starting to look for another property.

**How do you rate the commercial in part of your filmmaking output?**

I thoroughly enjoy them. They are well paid and I don't destroy them at all. People like to say commercials are stepping stones to features, but commercials are stepping stones to commercials. There is a great shortage of good scripts for commercials in Australia and there are not that many people making the sort I like to make which are dramatic, humorous and subtle. I hope

Especially features are stepping stones to features. *Next of Kin* was a stepping stone to *Next of Kin*, and now it does. I want to cover this territory again. Next time I would like to have a stranger property, some more actors, a bigger budget and more time. ■





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# Joan Fontaine

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seemed to be associated with one particular studio . . .

No, Selznick ruled me out all the time, and took the money. It was brilliant of him, instead of being enticed by getting me in a film, and, after a lot of work, the film story or may not be good, he would just hire me out and keep 95 per cent of the money. It was brilliant tactics.

Which of the studios did you enjoy working at best?

You don't care about the studios, you care about the film. One studio looks like the others, it doesn't matter. You don't see anybody, you just go to the set and back to the dressing room or make-up department.

But the films seem to emerge with a particular kind of quality or show that stamps them as MGM, Paramount or whatever . . .

## Accidents

Well, were the roles of Lady St. Columb in "Freckles and the Creek," which you obviously hated, or Susan in "Affairs of Susan," part of a deliberate policy to play more sophisticated parts, to get a more sophisticated image?

I wanted to do Affairs of Susan — it was fun playing four different characters — but, as for Freckles and the Creek, I was forced to do it. There was no plot, no plan, no design. I was a girl and my profession, Mr. Selznick, a star. So what could I do? Just stand still and freeze, or go by my.

And you like to keep working. Actually, I enjoyed your film "Vivian" in "Affairs of Susan" very much. I wondered why you didn't play more comedy . . .

They didn't give it to me, dear, that's the whole point. You seem to think I had some ability to guide my own career. I had none — none whatsoever. They told you what you were going to do, they selected the property. How could I go up to the head of a studio and say I want to play comedy? I was just sold to RKO for the role.

Coming to what I see as a couple of high spots, when I use "Ivy" in 1947, at the age of about 12, I become your devoted follower. That was the first film I saw you in, and I thought you played the sort of woman who gives whiskers a good name. I've seen a several films since, and it's a great decorative melodrama. How do you see it?

I am the political background. I was under contract with Universal, and it was very hard to say, "Here I

am. I want to work." So they said, "All right, come and see, you say, 'I don't see, I see R or G,' give me that." That's all it is. There isn't any lively plot, you don't have any one reading script for you or coming to you and saying, "Now that's for you!"

You are thinking of what agents are doing. Good agents come but four or five directors. They would buy their stage plays or scripts for their clients and see that those films were produced. That was the day of the great impression, that kind of thing. I didn't come in my time. I had just late before when James Stewart, Jack Ford, etc., had as their agent Lionel Haywood, a man of great skill and charm. He was Maggie Sullivan's husband, and he only handled clients, and followed their careers. He would see that they had stage plays, would be there during rehearsal, would come with the writers. That is what you have to have in the studio.

Let's take Katherine Hepburn. She found Spencer Tracy and, regardless of their personal life, they worked as a marvelous team. That must have conferred with the writers and the producers, and if one studio wanted to have them, they would see that they were backed and went to another studio. You really need two people to make a career out of it. It's very hard to do it alone. Bing Crosby had his sister family working for him. Dorothy Crosby was his business manager, and Rich Hope worked the same way. Two have an ongoing commercial career; you need a team.

What do you remember about playing Ivy? Did you enjoy being a wicked woman for the first time in your career?

I didn't see I was a little sick of what I call "the girl on the piano bench", sitting there making moody eyes at the man who is very boring. So it was kind of nice to be aggressive to some extent. The costumes were fabulous, I must admit, and the song by Henry Carmichael was nice. But I knew, by the time, that it was a "B" picture, you could smell that.

A "B" picture directed by Sam Wood and produced by William Cagney-Merkel?

Sam Wood was not a very good director and William Cagney-Merkel was not a set designer.

Which probably accounts for its being one of the best-looking Hollywood films of the 1940s . . .

Yes, but it was not the Lincoln, it was the Ford. One was quite aware of that.

I am a great devotee of this film, so I am fascinated to hear these little credentials are extraordinary. It

had a marvelous cast all down the line, including character actresses like Sadie Pankin, Bessie D'Amico and Susan Varday, and all those other English actors . . .

But they went all low-proof. Pierre Kovalev was not a star. So they need a star, which I pursued. I was, and they accused me with inferior actors — not inferior in acting, but in price — and a poor deal who had not done a great deal (he was principally known for *Good With the Wind* and *Daniel* was the slightly one in that). I automatically knew that this was one step backwards.

I wonder about the next film, which seems to me not merely the highest of your career, but indeed one of the highspots of all Hollywood filmmaking, "Letter From an Unknown Woman." In it, you give, what seems to me, one of the two or three best performances in an American film . . .

That was political, and was shelved by the studio. There were inter-caste problems and it was produced by my husband (William Dieterle), who was one of the screenwriters at Universal. However, Selznick's brother-in-law had married Louis B. Meyer's daughter, Edie Goss, and he was strong to save the studio. He had a great deal of power so he told my husband that's Billy Goetz eventually took over that studio and other people's work was shelved. They weren't given a publicity budget, brand names or anything like that, and that lovely film got straight in a political shuffle.

It seems to have had very limited release . . .

Exactly and that is why they weren't prepared to spend money on it. It wasn't a William Goetz film.

You will be heartened to know that it is generally considered to be a great classic of filmmaking . . .

Oh, I couldn't agree with you more and it's a tragic thing that anything is lovely and as beautiful . . . They just thought it was crazy — and cut it!

Were you aware that you were working as a miscreant?

Oh, absolutely. [Max Ophüls was brought over by us to make it.] I was made with my company. We had a marvelous man called John Hamilton who did the sets and oversaw the costumes. We were the first to have a general visual integrator who worked with the cameraman on every single detail.

My clothes were worked out very carefully, step by step, the blacks and the whites, and all that was one. I like me in all the blacks and white, which was a lovely thing to do. It was all very clever and it was masterfully produced, masterfully thought out, the kind of thing that Selznick had done on *Rabbits and Good With the Wind* but ceased to do. He was then playing hares in the south of France.

One of the marvelous things about "Letter From an Unknown Woman" is the way all the elements are integrated. For instance, you can trace what is happening to Lisa through the changes in the costumes . . .

And more than that. Starting at 34 and going through up to 40 all in one film had never been done before. When you think that the film was not even up for an Academy Award! It is a political and that's why I am always impressed when people think they are involved in great film enterprises, but it is only (in Hollywood into now) because a political financial accident. It really is.

I am interested in what you said about the studios and really coming to you to have any special personnel at all. But did you think the studio system had anything going for it?

It had certainly for an actor — if you had a producer who believed in you, you got just what it takes. I got my work for the Affairs of Susan when I saw [Greta] Garbo and [Henry] Lewis one night at a nightclub. I went to the club and I had just seen two terrible comedians, so he saved them and dedicated the next five years to doing their films. So they had the picture they needed. You have to do that, but it was the kind of thing I was certainly not prepared to do. Being a woman, you don't want to find a professor like that, because it becomes an emotional, personal thing and I don't believe in making those men together. It can help it.

At a moment of time, my husband was involved in the production of *Letter From an Unknown Woman* and it probably was rocky for our marriage because you can't go home and say, "Look, I don't like the picture." It would say, "Look, I am your husband, and you do what I tell you, and the balance was gone. You are no longer a person able to talk about your director and say, 'I don't want to do it this way or that way.' To the man who is a husband at night and a producer by day. You are maybe someone those two and there is no way out.

At the beginning of the 1950s, you worked again for George Stevens in "Secaucus to Live Free," which is a film I am very fond of but I gather it wasn't big at the box-office . . .

1 Fontaine and Dieterle had formed RKO Productions in 1945, with Universal to finance their picture. John Hamilton is usually listed as producer.  
2 Hamilton is listed as co-producer of production.



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He was having studio problems and he took a very long time to be adamant. He first became pretty much his own producer without using a studio. His idea was it worked for him, I can't tell you how political this is — was to take as long as possible. I always used to accuse him of having a lot of Kodak film stock. He was pushing the studio and they would come in the next day and say we would have to finish in two weeks. He would say nothing at all, drag on his pipe and hold smoke a month. If he sent somebody back and said we would have to finish the day after tomorrow, he would take another month. By god, it worked for him. He became an all-powerful man by doing that.

He took six months to do *I Remember Mama* in 1947. Deliberately. Getting his way with the best of actors, making them a lesson. And those poor actors got made up every day and sat there and he would not shoot.

In the 1930s, many of the big women stars of the 1930s and 1940s became considerably less active. For example, Bette Davis, Katharine Hepburn, Claudette Colbert and Marie Curran made very few films in that decade, but you made as many in the 1940s as in the 1930s...

Oh, but I didn't. In 1934, I went to New York to do a play. I wasn't getting roles.

But in terms of numbers of roles, you played as many in the 1930s as the 1940s — 14, in fact. Though many were limited around the early years of the decade. You continued to work for some very interesting directors and one whom I would describe to great. What can you tell me about working for Fritz Lang in *"Beyond a Reasonable Doubt"*?

Not very much. He was pretty much a human man by that time. He was tall and he had to be on his best behavior. He was a very Protestant man, as was Orphée. "You will do as I tell you." Well, he was on his best behavior and perhaps that didn't help.

The leading man [Dana Andrews] was getting over having drunk too much for years and he was on the wagon, so there was a lucid performance there. The eyes were black; the film wasn't anything at all. It was a step backward for me.

What about working with Anthony Mann in *"Serenade"*, not to speak of *"Male Nurse"*?

Oh, my God! Mr. Mann had fallen in love with the Danish girl [Søren Mastrup] and they were holding hands in the program room when you were in the dressing to see the rushes, which I don't really think is cricket. He never

paid any attention to anybody but her. They did marry I believe.

As for Mann, he was always trying to connect outside. Oh, it was too awful. If it had not been for Wisniewski, I never had marriageless answers done by Howard Stroup. It would have been awful. I know it was not going to be a good film. Again, this was a studio commitment.

I have never seen it...

No? I haven't seen half the ones you are talking about.

One I am particularly fond of and want to ask you about was Robert Wise's *"Until They Sail"*...

We tried to fire me because one day I refused to do the poem that was somebody — Joan Semons. I think — no, no. "How do I love thee?" they left out a whole stanza. I told Bob Anderson [producer], but he said, "No we won't." I said, "Yes you have" and he found that I was right. I don't think that conferred on me easily.

Also, they were all sitting around and drinking after the day's work was over. I never drank and drove and I had to get home to my family. There was a little vicious thing too. No, I didn't like it at all.

It comes over as a low-key intelligent way. It is really quite amazing...

Well, Robert Wise was a writer and during rehearsal he literally took a stopwatch and timed it again. While I am that I knew he really could be a creator of any kind. He was a mechanical man.

Of course, he had cut his teeth on Orson Welles' and Val Lewton's films at RKO...

That's right. I suppose somebody taking a stopwatch and timing a scene. You are not even playing it. He was just timing, doing camera moves. Well, they can get stand-out to do that, but it's heartbreaking when that takes place. I had no respect for him after that.

What about Jean Negulesco, in whose you worked in *"A Certain Smile"*?

He was a dear man. He had been one of my wedding years ago. He had been in the Club Club in Hollywood. About a professional. By political consciousness he got where he did and he also had a great deal of artistic talent. He was a very good painter, and was intelligent, but nobody, as you know, is trained to be a producer or really trained to be a director. It is all accidental, experiential. You make a couple of good films and you are a genius like Orson. Well, you make a couple of bad films and you are bee-official poison. There is

no continuity here whatsoever. There isn't even the consistency in talent. It's a nerve-racking profession, very clumsy. You are lucky one day, unlucky the next.

You only played one character role on the screen, and it was so good I wonder why you had never done any more. I mean, *"Baby Warren"* in *"Tender is the Night"*, where you were the one who had obviously read the book...

It's odd that you should say that, because I was reading an article on me by John Russell, the New York critic, and he described my career as *"From Soft Girl to Tough Girl"*, and he said that, as a soft girl, I related to the audience so I could understand me as a tough girl. I was only one of the crowd. Well, I don't think Baby Warren was one of the crowd. But that's his opinion.

Did you enjoy doing that film? A lot of the things don't seem to me right about it...

I never saw it, but when we were on location in Scotland and Jennifer Jones was calling. Daniel Salzman every day in Hollywood. He was not allowed to produce it, but was actually the producer. Here again you have the producer named as the leading lady. They told me that the film was not very good. It was not right and neither was Joan Richards, but he had to cast somebody of her age. I am not staying anything against Jennifer and I am very fond of her, but she was not quite right for it. She was 19 years too old at least.

I think this is one of the very fine performances you ever gave — not at one end of the spectrum and I like it at the other...

It's a pity. There aren't many chic tough roles. That's a special thing in itself — well dressed and black attitude and all that. Leopard skin and long cigarette holder.

*"Tender"* was one of Henry King's last films. Did you enjoy working with him?

Henry King? Somebody brought out the fact that these two, before their marriage, were not going to and out of each other's bedrooms and they asked why not. I mean, it was obviously so in the book. He said, "It may be obvious in the book, but in my film they don't. They are married!" Now, rewriting Scott Fitzgerald — and the essence of Scott Fitzgerald, nevertheless, I mean, here we are. *Redoubt*.

I am fascinated to hear that. Your last film, on my screen that is, *"The Devil's Girl"*, as far as I know, has never been shown in Australia and I can't imagine why. I got good reviews and has an excellent cast.

Gene Haugness-Davis, Alec McCowen, Kay Walsh...

And Cyril Franklin directed.

Did you enjoy working in Britain again, for the first time since *"The Sea"*?

I had a lot of union problems. I just did not understand the union. Right in the middle of a scene at 11 o'clock, they would pull the light plugs on the set and say, "It's not in-break." I found this very hard to accept. It seemed very difficult for the director and production men for the actors and the whole idea of acting. You cannot, as Mr. Wise did, use a stopwatch on a scene.

Recently, as you said, you worked more on the stage in between making, bookending, flying, cooking and writing. What difference do you find in preparing a role for the stage or in relationship with the director on the set? Do you find it a noticeably different experience from working on a film?

I love being able to have a consecutive point of view. With acting for the screen, as you know, it's not and screen, out of chronology, whereas in the theatre you have the liberty ability to rehearse a character, let it grow and then to do it. I really get rather bored with a character after about six weeks of playing it, because the audience has insight into a great deal and then it becomes a matter of doing it really without any of your creative instincts. You really can't relax the actor as it were. So it's just rote, it becomes tedious.

I would have thought, for an actor, the stage, in a very major sense, is more an actor's art, whereas the film is more a director's art. Would you agree with that crude distinction?

The trouble with films in the director is right over the camera and he tells you when to lift your eyebrow and that's very difficult, unless you have a director like Cukor. He is there making your performance, and you can see him and you are pleased. You find you are doing things you never thought you could do before. Eddie Goulding was the same, but it's very seldom you find a director with whom you could feel his creativity.

What do you think of contemporary American cinema, would you like to be part of it?

Oh, yes, but to find a role is very difficult — one that I could be proud of. It sounds vain, but I do use a certain feeling, like you, find them you, and I don't want to disappoint those people. I really don't want to play old hags and

Continued on p. 283



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